

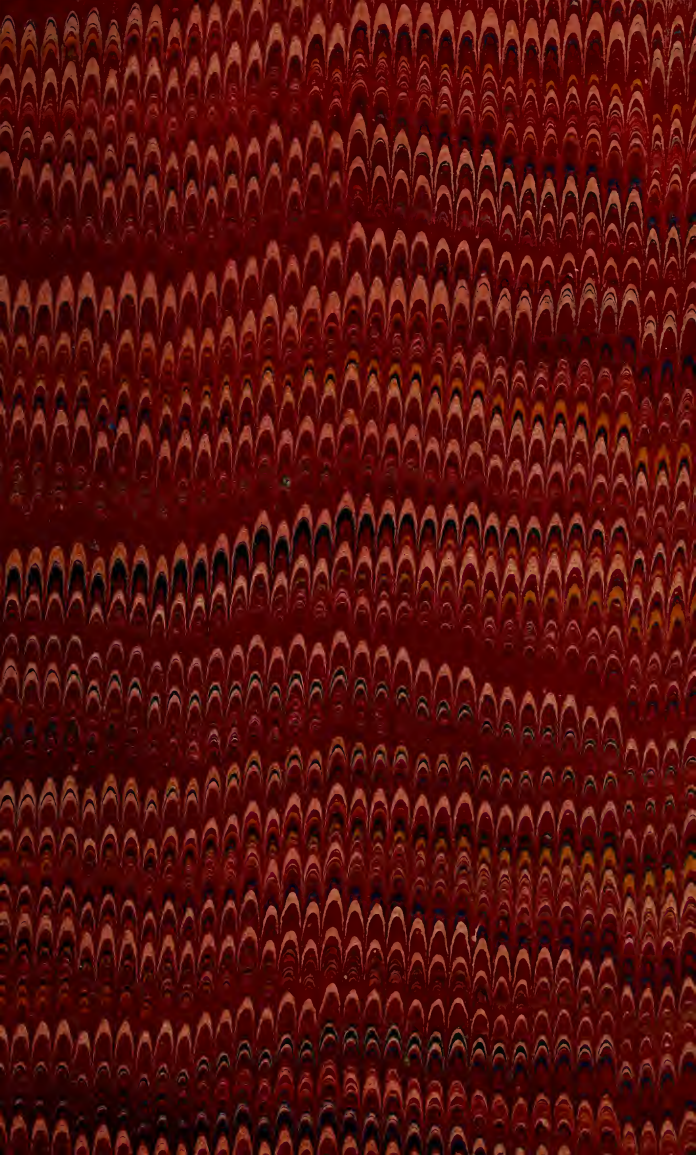


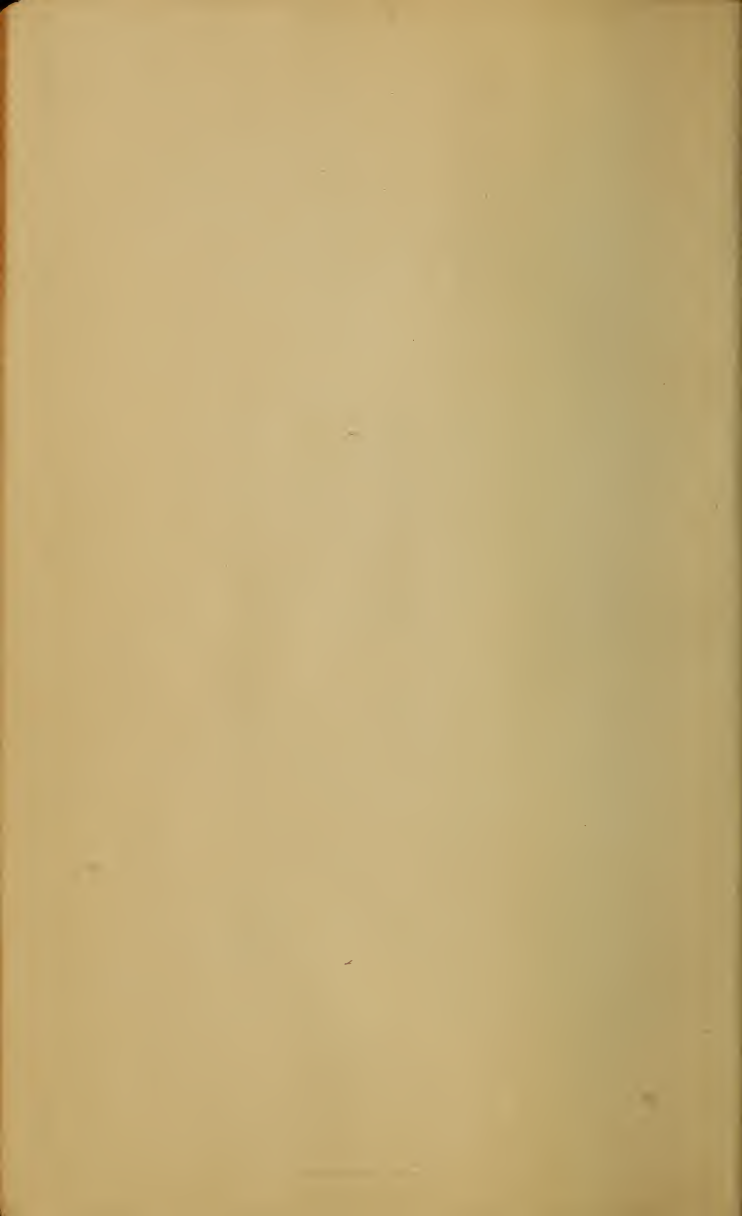
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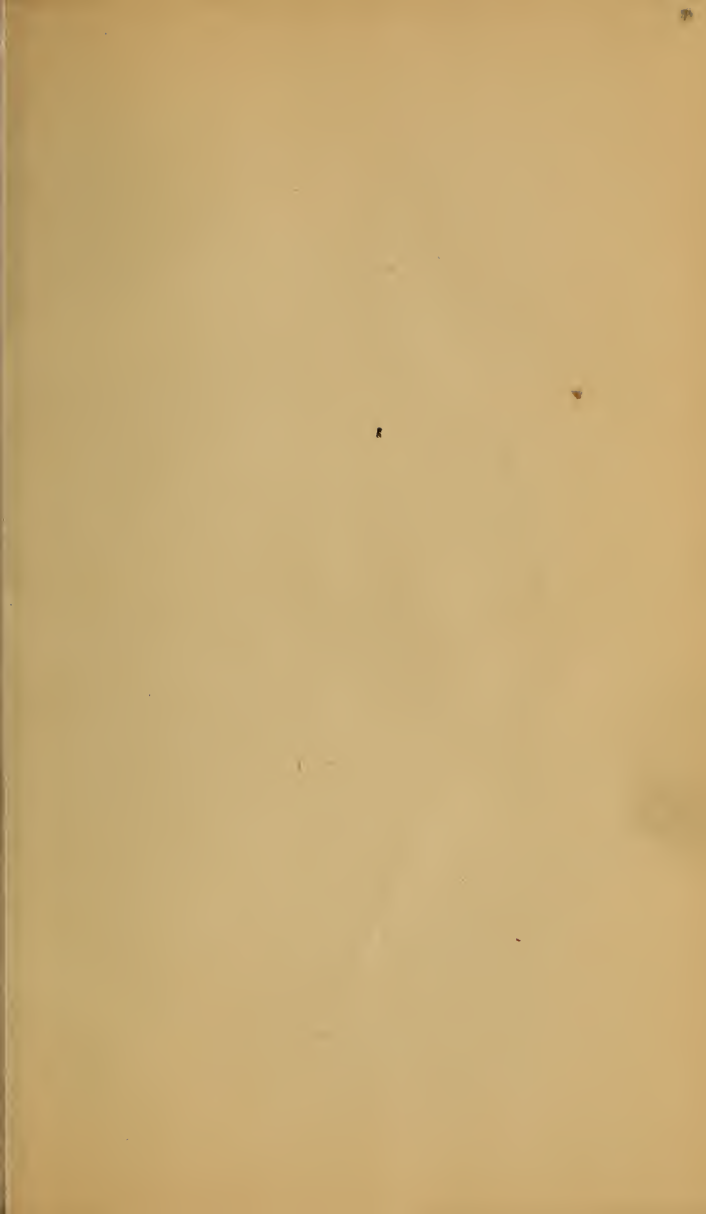
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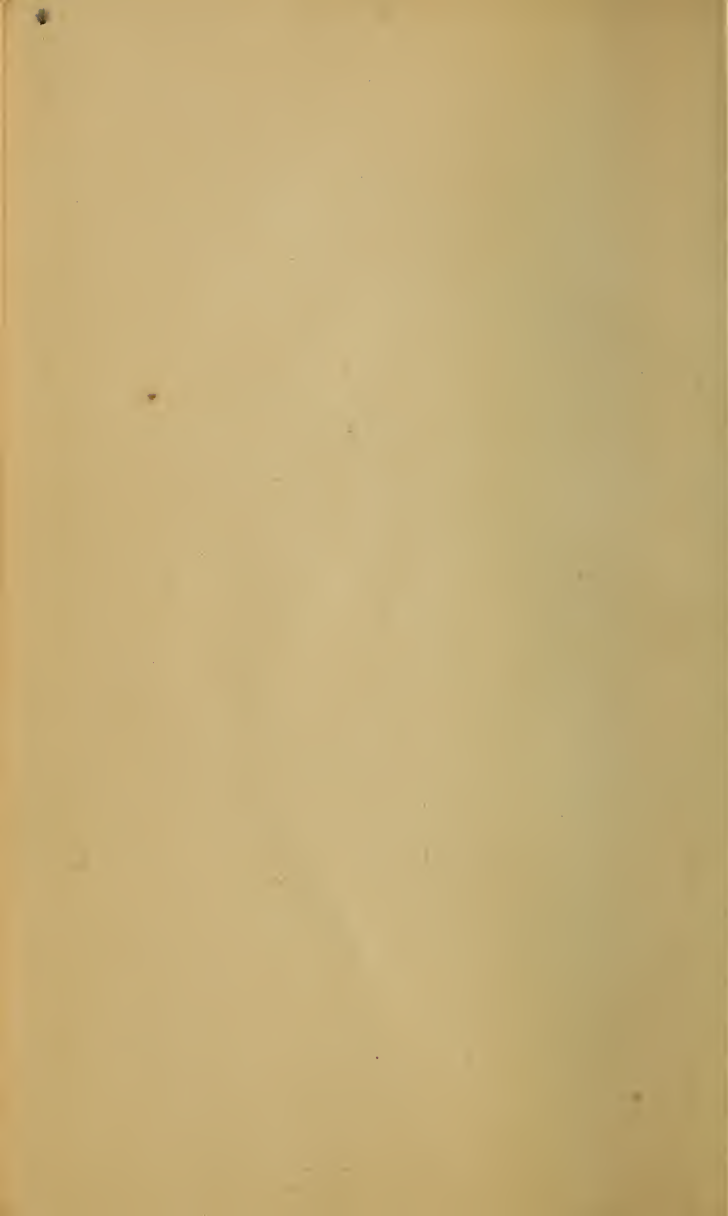
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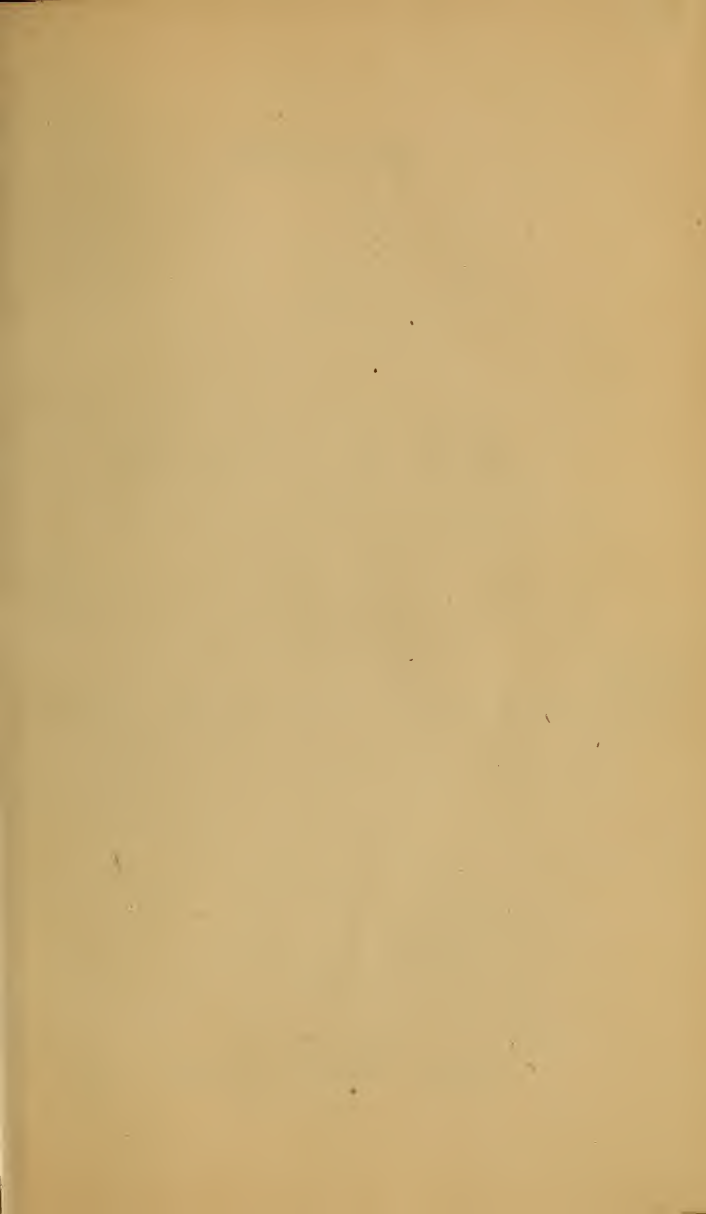














# ESSAYS

ON

# BAPTISM.

BY

REV. WILLIAM EAGLETON,

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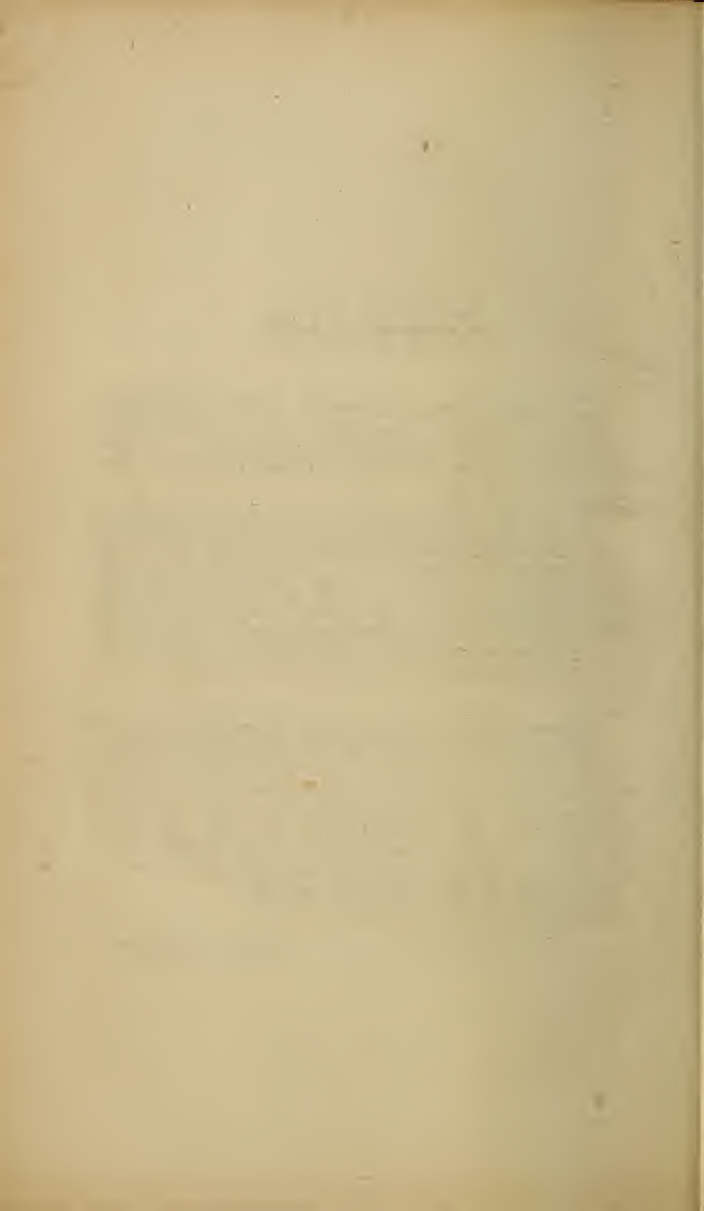
## P R E F A C E .

The following "Essays" were published originally in the Christian Observer, over the signature, W. E.

At the suggestion of some christian brethren for whom I cherish a high esteem, they are now published in pamphlet form, as being more convenient for preservation and future use.

Believing that these brief Essays elucidate and sustain important principles of revealed truth, they are commended to the blessing of God, and the serious and prayerful consideration of the christian public.

THE AUTHOR.



## SCRIPTURAL MODE OF BAPTISM.

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### ESSAY I.

THE relative importance of REPENTANCE, FAITH, and BAPTISM, in the glorious and gracious economy of man's redemption, is the subject to which attention is invited in the following essays. Captiousness about mere modes and ceremonies argues contractedness of intellect, or destitution of gospel charity. At the same time, indifference about the fundamental principles and doctrines of the gospel, is evidence of defectiveness either of intellect or of moral integrity. A mere external rite of religion, or the mere mode of that rite, may be rendered so prominent, or be invested with so much importance as to become a matter of very serious consideration. Every thing that God has made or appointed is proper and important in its own place. The sun is a glorious and useful luminary. But it is madness to regard it as the Deity, and to worship at its shrine! The Bible is a precious book. It is the sun of the moral world. But it is not the proper object of religious worship and adoration. It is the "*truth*"—but truth is not the Deity. The eucharist is a divine and

very important institution. But it is moral madness to pay divine adoration to the consecrated bread and wine, as if they were really and truly "the body, and blood, and soul, and divinity" of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The same remark may be made in reference to *Christian Baptism*. If the baptismal water be merely a sign or symbol, it ought to be so regarded. But if it really effects the removal of sin, it is manifestly no longer a symbol, but a glorious substance. Now it must be admitted that baptismal water either does wash away sin, or it is the appointed symbol of what actually does remove sin. This appears from the address of Annanias to Saul of Tarsus—"Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Acts xxii. 16. The notion of baptismal regeneration is no new thing under the sun. It belongs to the same school with that of transubstantiation, and is alike opposed to the spirituality of religion. But is water baptism a mere external and visible symbol, or is it a saving substance? What is the teaching of God's word on this subject? There are two aspects in which we are to view sin—its *guilt*, and its *pollution*. The pollution of sin is removed, or, in other words, regeneration and sanctification are effected by the influence of the Holy Spirit. John iii. 6, 8. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born



of the Spirit." John vi. 63. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." John i. 12, 13. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." In perfect agreement with this we find that all holy affections are ascribed to the Spirit. Gal. v. 22, 23. "The *fruit* of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Now if the *pollution* of sin is removed by the Holy Spirit, then, most unquestionably, it cannot be done by baptismal water. But how is the guilt of sin removed? The Spirit of truth and of holiness affirms that this is done by the atonement, or blood of Christ. Heb. ix. 22. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission. Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." 1 John i. 7. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Rev. i. 5, and vii. 14. "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This great truth is recognized, and its remembrance perpetuated in the grateful songs, both of the church militant and of the church triumphant. But it is the Holy Spirit that applies this atoning blood, and renders it effectual. Hence the blessed Saviour, speaking of this divine agent,

says, "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." John xvi. 14.

These and other texts of Scripture, alike obvious and pointed, do most clearly and indisputably prove, that both the pollution and the guilt of sin are removed by the Holy Spirit enlightening, renewing, and applying the atoning blood of Christ. It then fairly and irresistibly follows, that baptismal water is but the sign or symbol of the influence that removes sin. And who that has read the Bible with attention, is not aware that water is the Scripture symbol of the Holy Spirit? The following are striking examples: Isaiah xliv. 3. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." Psalm lxxii. 6, 7. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth." Acts i. 5. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." John iii. 5. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Acts ii. 26. "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." Acts x. 44, 47. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Titus iii. 5. "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of

regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." 1 Cor. xii. 13. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, and have been made to drink into one Spirit." Heb. x. 22. "Let us draw near with a true heart in the full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." 1 Pet. iii. 21. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.")

In these texts we have multiplied and most explicit evidence, not only that water is the appointed symbol of the Spirit, but also that water baptism is the sign of the baptism of the Spirit. And this one fact should have the weight of a thousand arguments to settle the mode of water baptism. Is it true that water baptism is the appointed sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? How then is the baptism of the Spirit performed? The correct answer to this question will settle the mode of baptism, for the sign should, most unquestionably, be used so as fitly to represent the thing signified, otherwise a false impression is made. If, in spiritual baptism, the soul is plunged into the Spirit, then, in like manner, should the body be plunged into the water. But if the Spirit is poured out, or falls like rain, or is sprinkled on the soul, then in like

manner, should the water be applied to the body; else how can the water be the sign of the Spirit? For what the water is to the body, the Spirit of God is to the soul. If in spiritual baptism the soul be plunged into the Spirit, then to sprinkle or pour the water on the body would be a false action, and make a false impression.

But if the Spirit falls upon the soul, or is poured out, or shed forth upon it, then, as manifestly, to plunge the body in water is a false action, and makes a false impression. The question then to be answered is, how is the baptism of the Spirit performed? "To the law and to the testimony." Acts i. 5, 8. "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Acts ii. 33. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." Acts x. 44, 45. "While Peter spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision, which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts xi. 15, 16. "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Here, it must be admitted, is an indisputable case of the bap-

tism of the Spirit. But how was it performed? "The Holy Ghost **FELL** on them." Now is it certain beyond dispute that water baptism is the symbol of the baptism of the Spirit? Then how should water baptism be administered? Should not the sign be applied as the glorious substance is said to be? Can immersion be a true representation of the case? But this is said only, by the by, as a hint to those who strenuously affirm that immersion is the only right mode of baptism!

You may expect something more in a subsequent number in reference to the relative importance of water baptism.



## REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND BAPTISM.

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ESSAY II.

IN my preceding remarks on the mode of baptism, I attempted to prove that *water* is the Scripture symbol of the *Holy Spirit*, and that *water baptism* is merely the external and visible sign of an internal, invisible, and saving influence. Consequently, it cannot be a saving ordinance. But, if not, it cannot be necessary to salvation, nor can it procure the forgiveness of sins. The Campbellites are the only class of immersionists with whom I am acquainted, that contend for the absolute necessity of water baptism in order to pardon and salvation.

But all classes of immersionists attach vast importance to water baptism, and not to the ordinance alone, but also to the *mode* of its administration. The whole virtue with them appears to consist in the mode of using the water. The water may be sprinkled, or poured profusely upon the person, but it is unavailing. The potent influence of the water is lost, if the person is not submerged.

It is in vain that you insist that the water does

not pass through the body, and come with a purifying influence on the soul—that it is merely a shadow—an emblem—that the *ordinance* cannot in the nature of the case be effective of salvation—much less can the MERE MODE of its administration—that the use of water is merely emblematical, and illustrative to the eye—that no mode of administration can be saving—and that one mode is to be preferred to another, merely on the ground that it more fitly and truly represents the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The most indisputable evidence that immersionists of every school do attach vast importance to the ordinance under consideration, and not to the ordinance only, but particularly to the *mode* of its *administration*, is to be found in the fact, that with one consent they exclude from the communion-table all that have not been immersed. A man may afford daily evidence of living piety—of true gospel holiness. His repentance, and faith, and love, and general deportment, may be unquestionable. His purity of character may be confessedly as great as is to be found in the ranks of the church militant. But all this avails nothing. If he has not been immersed, and that too by an immersionist, he is not permitted to approach the table of the Lord! Is not this a solemn, practical declaration, that a man cannot be a Christian without having been baptized by immersion?

The strenuous advocates of the importance of water baptism rely mainly on two texts—the one contained in Christ's commission to his apostles

—the other in the address of the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost. Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Peter said, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins.” Here it is said, FAITH, BAPTISM, and SALVATION, are connected by the Saviour himself, and *repentance, baptism, and remission of sins*, by the apostle Peter. At the first view this appears plausible and imposing, but on a closer and more scrutinizing view, the plausibility disappears. Surely we are not required nor authorized to believe that Jesus Christ intended in this great commission to attach the same importance to baptism that he did to faith. This appears from the omission of baptism in the latter clause of the text—“he that believeth not shall be damned.” If baptism be as necessary to salvation as faith is, then the want of baptism must be as detrimental to the soul as the want of faith. The omission of baptism in the last clause, therefore, speaks volumes as to the Saviour’s intentions, and of the relative importance he attached to faith and baptism. It will also be admitted that every intelligent, truthful author and instructor is consistent with himself. What then was the common teaching of Jesus Christ on this subject? John iii. 16, 18. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He that BELIEVETH on him

is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath NOT BELIEVED on the name of the only begotten Son of God." John v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and BELIEVETH on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." John vi. 40, 41. "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and BELIEVETH on him may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that BELIEVETH on me *hath* everlasting life." According to these solemn affirmations, the moment a sinner becomes a TRUE BELIEVER, he is already in possession of everlasting life, consequently his sins must be remitted. But there is no mention made of baptism, nor allusion to it. Who then can say in the face of these affirmations, that the great Author of the Christian religion intended to attach the same importance to baptism that he did to faith? Where did this incomparable teacher ever state that "he that is baptized shall be saved, and he that is not baptized shall be damned?" Where did he ever state that "he that is baptized hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life?"

But what was the doctrine of his illustrious forerunner? John iii. 36. "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." What is the doctrine of the beloved Paul? Acts xiii. 39. "By him all that believe are justified." Gal. iii.

26. "Ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Jesus Christ." Rom. v. 1, 2. "Being justified by *faith*, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Here is an epitome of the plan of salvation, and of blessed results. Christ is the living way. It is by *Faith* in him that the *state of grace is attained*. In that state, the soul rejoices in confident hope of the glory of God. The answer given to the trembling jailer, is confirmatory of the same sentiment. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This is the most solemn question that a probationer for eternity could propose while on his way to the judgment bar! The answer given by the apostles must either be *complete* or *defective*. To say that it is defective, is to table a solemn charge against divinely inspired teachers. It is to trifle with the instructions of the Holy Ghost, and to pronounce the word of God an unsafe guide!—Could infidelity itself go beyond this?—But if this answer be complete, then water baptism is not necessary to forgiveness and eternal life. If the answer be safe, then a simple compliance with it does unquestionably secure eternal life.

There are more than FIFTY passages in the New Testament in which faith and salvation are spoken of in direct connexion:—but in only ONE of these passages is baptism mentioned, or even alluded to. This affords a clear exhibition of



the mind of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. How well too did the conduct of Paul accord with this view? 1 Cor. i. 14-17. "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." Did Paul understand the plan of salvation? Did he understand the design and importance of water baptism? If he did, then the views that are here opposed, are fundamentally and ruinously wrong. If Paul had attached the same importance to baptism as to faith; had he viewed this ordinance as necessary to salvation, he never would, never could, have thanked God that he had baptized only a few individuals. Could he have thanked God that he had induced only a few to repent and believe the gospel? Could any strenuous advocate of the importance of water baptism consistently adopt the language of the apostle Paul? Baptism is necessary to forgiveness and salvation:—Yet I thank God that I have baptized none of you?

How tenderly affecting is the farewell address of the apostle Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus! Acts xx. 17-27. The apostle there solemnly affirms, that he had *kept back nothing* that was *profitable* to them; that he was pure from the blood of all men; that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. But what was the burden of his preaching?—

“Testifying both to the Jews and the Greeks, *repentance* towards God, and *faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” What vital importance did this eminent apostle attach to repentance and faith! In this summary of doctrine, this burden of his ministry, we hear nothing of water baptism! Could the apostle Paul then have regarded water baptism as necessary to salvation, or in any way connected with the remission of sins? Is it not manifest, that in his view, when that ordinance was compared with repentance and faith, it dwindled into insignificance, and disappeared! And yet, had not Paul the mind of Christ? Did he not understand the scheme of salvation?—Had he not a correct view of the relative importance of water baptism in the economy of grace? A sign may be of divine appointment:—it may be strikingly significant and appropriate:—but it never can be the *substance* it was intended to represent.

In closing this essay, let me ask—How little like the apostle Paul are those preachers who pervade the country from one extreme to the other, and with quenchless zeal and untiring assiduity, urge the people to obey the gospel by submersion under the *baptismal waves*! Who even attempt to make the impression, that those who refuse a *watery grave*, shall find a *grave of fire*!!

## REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND BAPTISM.



## ESSAY III.

IN the preceding essay, I attempted to show, that Jesus Christ, in the great apostolic commission—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned"—did not intend to attach the same importance to baptism as to faith—as though it were a saving ordinance. The remarks made in that essay, in reference to faith, will apply with the same propriety to repentance. They are both holy affections—the fruit of the Spirit—the exercises of a heart already renewed: and in the sight of God they constitute Christian character. One detaches the heart from sin; the other attaches it to Christ. They mutually imply each other—so that one cannot exist without the other. The heart that is truly penitent will renounce sin, and ardently desire to be delivered from its power, its pollution, and its consequences. To suppose that such a penitent heart will not embrace Jesus Christ by faith,

and rely on him for salvation, is a great absurdity.

On the other hand, the heart that truly embraces the Saviour by faith, cannot be impenitent; for the special object in embracing the Saviour is to obtain deliverance from sin, with all its accompaniments and consequences. But the impenitent heart is attached to sin, however great may be the dread of its consequences; and while the heart remains impenitent, it cannot desire deliverance from sin itself; nor can it affectionately and confidently embrace the Saviour, in the exercise of a true, living faith. It is, therefore, indisputably manifest, that repentance and faith are of the same moral nature—that they mutually imply each other—that one cannot exist without the other: consequently, when one is mentioned alone, the other is necessarily involved.

But this cannot be said in whole or in part of water baptism. That is a mere external and visible symbol or emblem. It does not, it cannot exist in the mind. It is intended merely for the eye. The motive in receiving that ordinance may be pure, or impure, or mistaken. But in the exercise of true repentance and faith, the motive must of necessity be pure, and the view intelligent. If this be true, then it follows, that when faith or repentance stands alone as necessary to salvation, and connected with it, the other is necessarily implied: but that baptism cannot be implied, where it is not expressed—being merely an external and visible sign. Water

baptism is the mere badge of discipleship, and no more constitutes a Christian, than the military costume does the soldier or the general. A coward might be arrayed in the costume of the soldier—but he would be a coward still. A soldier, or a general of the firmest nerve, and of the purest fire, might be arrayed in the garb of a common citizen, and still be a soldier or a general. It is admitted, that there may be a fitness in wearing the insignia of office—but the insignia do not in whole or in part qualify for office; but they are merely the external and visible indication of office.

Having made these remarks, let us now consider the address of the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." The question now to be considered is, what stress is to be laid on baptism, in connexion with the remission of sins? We are expressly assured, that without repentance, there can be no remission. But will the same apply to baptism? Would it not be fair to permit the apostle Peter to answer for himself? What, then, is his answer? The next account we have of this apostle, after the day of Pentecost, he is in the Temple in Solomon's porch, and in his public address we hear him say, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." Acts iii. 19. In this address, the apostle neither mentions baptism, nor even alludes to it; and yet he is directing the way to the obtainment of pardon.



Is it not hereby as manifest as light itself that the apostle Peter did not regard baptism as availing to the forgiveness of sin? And did he not teach the same doctrine impressively in his address to Simon, the sorcerer? Simon's judgment was convinced by the miracles he witnessed, that Jesus was the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, and he was baptized in due form. What did he lack of being a true disciple, according to the creed of the Campbellites? He had the faith that is produced by divine testimony, and he was baptized according to apostolical rule. But still he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity," for his "heart was not right in the sight of God." We may hence see the fundamental and unchangeable difference between the creed of the apostle Peter, and that of the society alluded to.

We have the words of Jesus Christ to the same effect. Speaking of his agonizing death, and of its glorious results, he adds—"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." This is the doctrine that Christ directed to be preached every where, among all nations. But what is the doctrine? Salvation in the name of Jesus! But on what condition is this salvation offered? "*Repentance and remission of sins!*" These two are inseparably connected. Wherever there is genuine repentance, there is also remission. But without this there can be no remission. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But

where is it said, "Except ye be baptized, ye shall perish?" There are ten passages in the New Testament, where repentance and forgiveness are connected either expressly or impliedly; and in only *one* of these is baptism mentioned, or even alluded to. Then, what a mischievous perversion of the word of God, and of the order of the gospel, is the *sensual dogma*, that baptism holds the same place of importance in the sinner's salvation, that repentance and faith do—and that without it there can be no forgiveness, no salvation! According to the instructions of Jesus Christ and his apostles, the penitent believer is pardoned, before he is baptized, and even should he never be baptized. Was the want of baptism a bar to the pardon and salvation of the penitent thief, that hung on the cross at our Saviour's side? It is solemn trifling to suppose it. What do the words of Jesus import? "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Where is Paradise? Shall the apostle Paul answer this question? He says it is the *third heaven*. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. The beloved John says, that Paradise is the blessed land, where the "tree of life" grows, and where its fruit is enjoyed. Rev. ii. 7. Could this thief, or any other sinner, have been saved without repentance and faith? Impossible—utterly impossible! But he was saved without baptism. Then baptism is not saving—nor is it necessary to salvation.

All denominations that claim to be Christian, require of adults a profession of repentance and



faith, before baptism, and as necessarily preparatory to it. But these are gracious affections—the fruit of the Holy Spirit—and indicative of a new moral nature, and of a state of justification before God. We have already seen, that this is the oft-repeated doctrine of the New Testament, especially as it regards faith. It may be well, however, to repeat a few texts: “He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life.” “He that believeth, is not condemned.” “He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth in me hath everlasting life.” “Who-soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.” Can language be plainer and more forcible? Is not the point under consideration clearly established? Do not repentance and faith clearly indicate that the great moral change has already been effected, and remission of sins granted? And yet it is necessary, that repentance and faith precede adult baptism. The inference, then, is fair and irresistible, that baptism cannot be necessary to remission of sins, nor intended for that purpose. If a man is already born of God—has already passed from death unto life—and is already in a state of justification—it is too late for him to obtain these new relationships and favours by some subsequent act?

It may then be asked—what is the *design* or

*use* of baptism, if a sinner may be pardoned and saved without it, and must be in a state of justification before he can rightfully receive it? In my next essay, I will attempt to answer this question.

## REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND BAPTISM.



## ESSAY IV.

It is a matter of practical interest to understand the relative importance of REPENTANCE, FAITH, and BAPTISM.—If water baptism is not intended for the remission of sins—if it is not saving in its nature—if a sinner may be pardoned and saved without it—if an adult must have a new moral nature, and be in a state of justification before he is scripturally prepared to receive it, then, it may be asked, what is the *use* of this ordinance? *Why* administer or receive it at all? In reply, it may be said that baptism is a sign—an outward and visible seal of the covenant of grace, as well as a symbol of the blood of Christ, applied savingly by the Holy Spirit. “Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” are the gracious fruits of the Spirit’s saving influence, and the necessary condition of salvation. These holy affections are the inward seal and ratification of God’s gracious covenant. When this covenant is thus entered and ratified between God and the soul, it is fit and proper that the visible sign and

seal of the covenant should be used. It is also fit and proper that the *symbol*, appointed to represent the renewing of the Holy Ghost, should be used, inasmuch as that important change has passed. It is intended to give *visibility* to an *invisible and glorious reality*. It is intended visibly to put the crown of glory on the head of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for atoning blood, renewing influence, and pardoning grace. So that, while it is a visible manifestation of renewal and pardon, it is also an avowed recognition of Christ's authority, and a badge of discipleship.

The sinner that professes repentance and faith, and refuses, when he has an opportunity, to make this public manifestation of what the Holy Ghost, for Christ's sake, has done for his soul, gives fearful evidence that the needful change has not yet been effected. But when the ordinance has been administered and received, it is, after all, nothing but an outward sign; and to seize upon it as though it were the glorious substance, is a blunder such as might cause laughter in hell, and tears in heaven! It is a blunder precisely of the same character with that of transubstantiation! The bread and wine in the eucharist are signs, and only signs—just as the baptismal water is. It is no more absurd to suppose that the bread and wine, after consecration, cease to be bread and wine, and become truly and really the body and blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ, than it is to suppose that water applied to the body, either profusely or sparsely, can remove

either the guilt or the pollution of sin from the soul! Each supposition is alike revolting to common sense. Transubstantiation and baptismal regeneration belong to the same school, and originate from the same source; and that is the repugnance of man's fallen and perverse nature to the *spirituality* of the Christian religion. A sensual religion, consisting in forms and ceremonies, is very grateful to human depravity.

This is the religion of paganism. It is the religion of popery. It is also the religion of Campbellism. How convenient it is "to eat the flesh and drink the blood" of the Son of God by partaking of the consecrated wafer and wine! How convenient also to "be born again" by crediting the scripture testimony of Christ, and receiving water baptism by immersion! It is universally true, that in proportion to the importance that is attached to a mere *ceremony of religion*, and the religious veneration that is cherished for it, the less the veneration that is cherished for *religion itself*. When the sign is worshipped, the substance is neglected. The sensual Romanist bows before the sign of the cross and the consecrated wafer, and then pays his adorations to the Virgin Mary and the patron saints, while Jesus Christ himself is neglected, or receives but a transient notice. So with those who regard water baptism as a saving ordinance. This is the burden of the ministry, and the comprehension of the desires of the laity. Repentance and faith are held in little estimation. The



necessity of godly sorrow for sin is often met with a contemptuous sneer! There is only one kind of faith recognized, and that is produced by testimony. The atoning sacrifice and intercession of the Redeemer have little or no place in their scheme. Regeneration by the Spirit's influence is a chimera, for the "doctrine of total depravity is a *libel* on human character!" Consequently the mind is turned away, both from Calvary and from heaven, and forgiveness and salvation are sought in "Jordan's mighty *water-goddess*!" How much like the deluded Hindoo bathing in the sacred Ganges!

But again. If baptism were necessary to forgiveness and salvation, it must be repeated after every offence, or there could be no forgiveness. This must be so, unless it can be made to appear that water baptism, in the efficacy of its saving power, operates *prospectively* as well as *retrospectively*, availing not only to the blotting out of *past offences*, but also to the furnishing of an *indulgence* for the commission of *future crimes*! It is quite manifest that without repentance and faith no sin can be pardoned. Though the sinner may be renewed—though he may have fled with a penitent, believing heart, to the gospel refuge, and obtained the forgiveness of all his iniquities, yet, on the commission of another sin, there must be a renewal of his penitence and faith, or he cannot be pardoned. Is it not then manifest, that if baptism were intended to occupy the same place of importance in the economy of salvation as repentance and faith, or if it were

intended for the remission of sins, or really necessary to remission, it must be repeated after every offence?

But enough has been said to show the folly and danger of the scheme. It is a most silly, and, at the same time, a most woful perversion of a gospel ordinance. It is as clear as the light of heaven, that baptism was not appointed to procure the remission of sins; that it was intended to be the mere sign of that influence that enlightens, and renews, and purifies the soul, and of that blood which cancels human guilt. Therefore the prominent and urgent inculcation of the indispensability of baptism to forgiveness of sin, and the administration of the ordinance with a view to that effect, is practising ruinous deception, and incurring the guilt of the blood of lost souls! It is changing the sign into the substance—excluding the *atonement*, and substituting *water*! It is manifestly not *Christian baptism*, but the *deification* of that ordinance! It is neither administered nor received with the true intent of Christian baptism, and is therefore something essentially different. To regard it as Christian baptism, is to become accessory to a most delusive and destructive heresy. Were it open and avowed *deism*, the danger would be less. The fact that it has something of the external semblance of Christianity, arms it with the power of a deeper and a more insidious deception, and of a more extensive and frightful destruction! Is it not too bad to *despoil the soul of heaven* by the very *symbols of Christi-*



*anity!* It is extracting *death* from *life itself*!— It is turning the instruments of grace into the implements of destruction! Is it then consistent or allowable that such a heresy be countenanced by the ministers of the Christian religion! But to admit their baptismal regeneration to be Christian baptism, is to lengthen the cords, and strengthen the stakes of this destructive heresy.

## REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND BAPTISM.

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ESSAY V.

I HAVE a few more remarks on the relative importance of REPENTANCE, FAITH, and BAPTISM.

If baptism is merely a ceremony of religion—an external and visible sign of something internal and invisible—it may be asked, how can the administration or the reception of that ordinance be attended with such danger, even if the views and intentions be mistaken and unscriptural? It may be said, that to go down into the water, and to come up out of the water, is a small matter; and that even to be plunged under the water cannot be very harmful. It is readily admitted that all this is, in itself considered, a small and harmless matter. But it is the *intention*, that gives character to the *action*. To present a little incense before a block of wood, or of marble, is a small matter in itself; and yet in its results it may be vast as immensity, and endless as eternity! In the purpose of the actor it may be the heart's reliance on an idol, and the renunciation

of Jesus Christ, and of Calvary's expiatory sacrifice!

In like manner to administer or receive baptism for the remission of sins, is to rely on that ordinance for pardon and salvation. It is immaterial, what is substituted in the room of Jesus Christ and of his atonement. It may be prayer, or tears, or penance, or alms-deeds, or baptism, or the eucharist. Whatever the heart reposes on in hope of eternal life becomes its saviour. It was on the ground of this unquestionable principle, that the apostle Paul said with so much earnestness and emphasis to the Galatians, "Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Circumcision in itself was not wrong, for it was an ordinance that God himself had appointed. But the Jews had perverted its intention. They regarded it as necessary to salvation. They practised it with this intention. This became their heart's reliance for acceptance in the sight of God. They thus rejected Jesus Christ; consequently could derive no advantage from his atonement. They were guilty of converting an ordinance of the church into an idol. To depend on circumcission for salvation is just as foolish and as wicked, as to depend on a block of marble. The same may be said of baptism, or the Lord's Supper. In the sight of God they are idolaters, who depend on either for the remission of sins, or for salvation in whole or in part. It is a virtual rejection of Christ, and renunciation of the scheme of salvation, that is

revealed in the gospel. We are there plainly taught, that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." Therefore to administer or receive baptism for the remission of sins, is to contradict this inspired declaration, and to trust in water for salvation. May we not then feel assured, that if the sainted Paul were again commissioned to preach the everlasting gospel, he would earnestly and solemnly aver to those, who administer and receive the ordinance of baptism as necessary to salvation, and as intended for the remission of sins,—“Behold, I Paul, say unto you, that if ye be baptized, Christ shall profit you nothing?”

In view of the thoughts suggested in the preceding essays, would it not be well for immersionists of every class to inquire, whether they are not in danger of laying too much stress on a mere ceremony of religion. They seem to practise on the supposition, that if a *little* water be good, *much* must be better. If it is suitable to apply water to the body at all, it is safest to make a universal application. And is it not the practice with such, when administering this ordinance, if any part of the body should unfortunately not be immersed, to perform the operation again, or to be specially careful to have the whole body under the water? Now, what does this imply? What harm would result from a partial application of the water, if the water itself is not purifying? If the water be purifying, then it ought with care to be applied to every part of the body. In that case the purification would be

universal and effectual. But it would be the purification of the body only. If man has an immortal spirit, and if that spirit be depraved, there is need of an *inward* purifying influence. But if the Spirit of God exerts that influence on the soul, and the baptismal water is merely the sign of the Spirit's influence, then the water should be applied, as the Spirit's influence is said to be applied.

But we all know, that spiritual baptism is not effected by immersion. Why, then, immerse the whole body in the water? What does this immersion mean? Surely not the burial, that is spoken of by the apostle Paul in Rom. vi. 3—6, and Col. ii. 11, 12. That is spiritual baptism manifestly. It results in the crucifixion of the *old man*—in the destruction of the *body of sin*. What is buried? Surely not the living man, for this is burial *into death*! It is the dead body, that is buried. But in this case it is the *body of sin*, or the *old man*, that is *put to death*. And in Col. ii. 11, 12, the baptism is explained by “the circumcision made without hands.” It must be a baptism made without hands. Moreover, the meaning of the term *burial*, is the disposal of a dead body in any way; either by interring—by burning—by embalming—or by any other method. What, then, I ask, is meant by baptismal immersion? It cannot fitly represent the influence of the Holy Spirit—for that influence is *poured out*, or *shed forth*, or *falls upon the soul*. Is there not a lurking thought, that the water itself has a *cleansing efficacy*? And is there

not danger of the soul leaning upon the water in the hope of eternal life? Should not this be carefully guarded against? But can this be easily done, while there is such stress laid on the ordinance, and especially on the *mode* of its administration?



## JOHN'S BAPTISM.

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ESSAY VI.

JOHN was a distinguished character, whether we view him as the subject of interesting prophecy—as an eminent saint living in communion with Heaven—or as filling the most important and dignified office that was ever filled by a mere man. He was the connecting link between the Old and New Testament dispensations. He was commissioned to herald the advent of the promised Messiah. He was the *index-finger*, pointing the Jewish nation to “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” The eulogium passed by the truthful Jesus on this illustrious character, cannot be heightened.—“Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist.” More than this cannot be affirmed of a mere man in his earthly estate;—however true it may be (and certainly is) that the lowest place in heaven is higher and more dignified.

To the question—“The Baptism of John—was it from heaven, or of men?” but one answer



can in truth be given. John was no impostor--no fanatic--no self-inspired prophet--no self-commissioned herald. He was doubtless the promised Elijah of the prophet Malachi. He came in the *spirit* and *power* of Elijah. He was sent by the same authority, and inspired by the same Spirit. He appears also to have been of the same intellectual, physical, and moral character. It was certainly in pursuance of divine instruction that he taught and baptized. But he did not, most unquestionably, administer what is properly called--*Christian Baptism*.--John's ministry was intended to accomplish a two-fold purpose:--to prepare the way of the Lord by turning the mind of the Jewish nation from sin to the Messiah--and then to make a public manifestation of the Messiah to that nation. Hence he claimed in accordance with preceding prophecy to be--"The voice of one crying in the wilderness--Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." And, speaking of the Messiah, he says--"I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest unto Israel, therefore am I come, baptizing with water." The burden of John's preaching was--"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repentance implies undissembled sorrow for sin, and true reformation of life. A profession of repentance was to precede baptism, which is the emblem of true internal reformation. John's baptism was therefore called--"THE BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE." And as God has graciously connected the remission of sins with repentance, it

was called—"The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

It was not John's ordinary baptism that Christ received; for he had no sins to be remitted, and he was incapable of repentance by reason of the fact, that he had never sinned. How, then, could he receive the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins?

John, though he was personally unacquainted with Christ, yet was well aware of the spotless purity of the Messiah's character. Hence his manifest embarrassment when Jesus came to him for baptism. But the whole transaction is plain and intelligible when we consider that John was a Jewish priest, and that Jesus came to him in that character, and sought by his hands to be set apart by baptism to the priestly office, according to the established law of initiation into that office. Christ was now of legal age—being about thirty years old—and he could not legally enter on his public ministry without being consecrated by one who had authority. He did not come "*to destroy the law, but to fulfil.*" Hence his reply to John's hesitancy to administer the ordinance—"Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." This language has a manifest reference to some established ordinance of heaven. The act of obedience could not be anticipative, but must have been retrospective; but, if retrospective, to what law had it respect? Surely not to the law of Christian Baptism, for that ordinance had not yet been appointed. Nor was it appointed till after the re-

surrection of Christ, as appears from his commission to the apostles, contained in Matt. xxviii. 19, and as will also appear from some considerations, to be presented hereafter.

It can be plainly and easily shown, that Christ was not baptized to set an *example*, however common the opinion to the contrary may be.

1. Christ was baptized, after all the people had received that ordinance. Matt. iii. 5, 6, 13. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. *Then* cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him." The testimony of Mark is to the same effect. The evangelist Luke states—"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened." Now if Jesus had intended his reception of that ordinance for an *example* to others, would he not have been the first to receive it? It might be said with some plausibility, that Christ intended his conduct on that occasion to be approbative, and confirmatory of the conduct of the multitudes that attended John's ministry, and received his baptism. But an example to them it could not be. May it not, it may however be asked, have been intended as an example to his disciples to influence their conduct thereafter? That this could not have been the design will appear from the considerations following.

2. Christ was not baptized with Christian baptism—because he would in that case have been

baptized in his own name, as well as in that of the Father and of the Spirit. But is not this supposition manifestly absurd? Is not the reception of baptism in the name of any one—a practical profession of subjection to his authority? But is it not absurd for any one to profess subjection to his own authority?

3. Adults are required to repent of their sins before receiving the ordinance of baptism. But Christ was incapable of repentance, inasmuch as he had never sinned. How then could he in the reception of this ordinance set an example? Could he by possibility receive the ordinance with the view and feelings required of his disciples? And if not—would not the example be utterly defective?

4. Adults are required, before baptism, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, and trust in him for salvation. But could Christ in this particular set an example for his followers? What! receive himself, and rest on himself for salvation! A holy Saviour, trusting in himself for salvation! Surely this sentiment will not be advocated. It follows, then, that Christ was not baptized to set an example to his followers—for he could not possibly receive that ordinance, as he requires his followers to receive it.

5. Christ was not baptized to set an example, for Christian baptism had not yet been instituted. There can be no propriety in calling that Christian baptism, which was not instituted by Christ himself. But Christ did not enter on his ministry till after his baptism. Is it not absurd to

suppose that Christ was inducted into his public ministry by an ordinance of his own appointment? Is not the appointing of ordinances a part of his ministry? How then could Christian baptism be appointed before Christ was inducted into his ministry? Nothing is more manifest than the fact, that John did not, and could not, administer Christian baptism.

1st. John did not receive his ordinance from *Christ*, but from the *Father*. John i. 33. "And I knew him not, but *he that sent me to baptize with water*, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." With what propriety, then, could *his* be called *Christian baptism*?

2d. The fact that John's baptism was intended to prepare the way for Christ to enter on his ministry, is conclusive evidence that Christ did not appoint it;—for the appointing of gospel ordinances, as has already been remarked, was a part of the business of his public ministry.

3d. John's baptism was not administered in the name of the Trinity, for some of his disciples had not heard of the *name*, or the *existence* of the Holy Ghost. Acts xix. 1-4. But it is essential to Christian baptism that it be administered in the name of the Trinity.

4th. John's was not Christian baptism, because some of his disciples were rebaptized with Christian baptism. Acts xix. 5. Would it not be solemn trifling for an inspired apostle to administer Christian baptism to one who had already re-



ceived that ordinance? And is it not manifest that the apostle Paul, on the occasion referred to, intended to *discriminate* between *John's* baptism and the baptism of *Christ*?

5th. John was imprisoned, and beheaded, before the Christian dispensation was introduced.

Having prepared the way for Christ, and introduced him into his ministry, he lost his head, and went up the shining way to receive a martyr's crown!

But the Mosaic ritual was in force till Christ offered himself on the brow of Calvary as the great atoning sacrifice—of which all the sacrifices which had before been offered were but the types and shadows. But could a *gospel ordinance* be in force *before* the introduction of the *gospel dispensation*!

If the preceding remarks be correct, the following points are established.

1st. Jesus Christ did not receive John's ordinary baptism, called—"The baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."

2d. Jesus Christ was not baptized to set his followers an *example*—it being impossible in the nature of the case, that he should have been baptized with the motives and exercises of heart which are required of his followers.

3d. The baptism administered by John was not the *Christian Baptism*.

## THE MODE OF JOHN'S BAPTISM.

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ESSAY VII.

As an ordinance cannot be administered before it is instituted, it is manifest, that John did not administer *Christian* baptism. But, if his was not Christian baptism, then the *mode* of its administration will not decide that of Christian baptism. Yet, inasmuch as baptism of every kind is an external purification, and indicative of that, which is internal; it may be thought, that the mode of administration is one and the same. In this view of the case it may not be unimportant to ascertain *how* John administered his baptism. It is by many taken for granted, that John did certainly baptize by immersion; and they may, perhaps, be not a little surprised, if this position is called in question.

“What! Does not the evangelist Matthew inform us, that Jerusalem, Judea, and the region about Jordan, were baptized of John *in Jordan*? Does he not further state, that Jesus, when he was baptized, ‘went up straightway *out of the water*?’ Does not the testimony of Mark perfectly coincide with that of Matthew? And



does not John the Evangelist also say, that John the Baptist was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there? Would any one, then, be so reckless and presumptuous, as to suppose, that John, who was even called emphatically, 'THE BAPTIST,' did not administer his ordinance by *immersion*!" But—after all this confidence of opinion and of assertion—perhaps, on careful investigation, it may appear, that John neither did, nor could, administer his baptism by immersion.

1. The whole period of John's ministry was not long enough for him to have immersed the vast multitudes, that attended his ministry, and received his baptism. John the Baptist was six months older than the man Christ Jesus. This is evident from the account given in the first chapter of the gospel by Luke. It is very probable, that John entered on his ministry at the age of thirty, as this was the common age for the commencement of the ministry of Jewish priests, as it was certainly the age of Christ, when he entered on his public ministry.—Luke iii. 23. If this view be correct, then John was engaged in his ministry only six months before the baptism of Jesus Christ. The accounts given by the several evangelists clearly show, that no considerable length of time could have elapsed, after John commenced the administration of his ordinance, till Christ came to be baptized of him. There is nothing in the whole history, calculated to make the impression, that John had entered on his ministry before the accustomed age. But,

the whole of this short period, from the commencement of his ministry till the baptism of Christ, was not spent exclusively in administering the ordinance of baptism. Some considerable portion must have been spent in the work of enlightening the public mind, and amending the public morals, so as to prepare the way for the advantageous administration of the ordinance. Consider, then, the shortness of the whole period of John's ministry, and the multitudes, that were baptized by him, and it will be very manifest, that immersion could not have been practised. The language of the sacred historians is very strong and comprehensive. Matthew says—"Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan." Mark says—"And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river Jordan." Luke says—"When all the people were baptized." Jerusalem was a large and populous city. Judea was densely populated. As many as three millions often attended the Passover. About two millions and a half, according to Josephus, perished at Jerusalem during the siege of that city, and at the time of its destruction. After making all reasonable deduction for foreigners, that might have attended the festivals at Jerusalem, still it must be admitted, that a very considerable body of that nation attended the ministry, and received the baptism of John. Then, did he *immerse* them? Did he baptize them *singly*, even by the most

*expeditious mode* of baptism? Impossible! He must have baptized them in some way, as Moses did the people of Israel on an occasion of great interest: "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, all, that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and *sprinkled it on the people*, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.—Ex. xxiv. 7, 8. John's ministry terminated shortly after the baptism of Christ. The next day after this event—"John stood and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! and the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." The only further account we have of John's ministry is in Enon near to Salim just before his imprisonment.—John iii. 23, 24. From Matthew and Mark it appears, that the forty days' temptation in the wilderness ensued immediately after the Saviour's baptism; and that John's imprisonment took place soon after.—Matt. iv. 1-12; Mark i. 9-14.

2. John did not administer his baptism by immersion, for he baptized *with* water.—Acts i. 5. "For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." This is the testimony of Jesus Christ, who received the ordinance at his hands. This text cannot be translated "*in water*," for there is no preposition used to justify such a translation; and even if there were, it would

not be thereby justified, because John's baptism is spoken of in contrast with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is true, that the preposition is used in this latter case. But it is manifestly absurd to render the text, "Ye shall be baptized *in the Holy Ghost*"—for this would contradict all the inspired accounts of the impartation of the influences of the Holy Spirit. The subject of spiritual baptism never *rises above the Holy Spirit* so as to be *immersed into his influences*; but these sacred influences always come upon the soul. Now if it would be absurd to render the above text, "in the Holy Ghost," although the preposition *en*, is used in the Greek text; how much more objectionable must it be to render the text, "in water," when there is no preposition in the Greek text? The term, that is here translated *water*, is in the dative case, and is what grammarians call, the *dative* of the *instrument*. It is therefore manifest, that John in baptizing applied the water in some way to his disciples; consequently he did not *immerse* them in it. To immerse is most unquestionably to apply the subject to the water; but John applied the water to the subject. How else could he baptize *with water*? Could it, therefore, be proved a thousand times, that John baptized in Jordan, it would not follow, that he administered his ordinance by immersion. John's baptism, and all the baptisms observed by the Jews, were purification ordinances, and of an emblematic character; and these were all practised by sprinkling or pouring the water, or the blood (as

the case might be) on the subject. Let the reader that doubts the truth of this remark, consult the Mosaic ritual. Or, if that should require more attention, than he has leisure or inclination to give to this subject, let him consult a short and inspired account, which he may find in the 9th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.

3. But may it it not be demonstrated, not only, that John did not administer his baptism by immersion, but that he did not baptize in the river Jordan? The inspired history of this transaction must unquestionably be true. It would be impious to doubt it. In all true history there must also be harmony between the different parts; though there may be apparent discrepancy. Now what is really the testimony of the inspired evangelists? Matthew says, (as our translation reads,) that John baptized *in* Jordan. Mark says, that he baptized *in* the river of Jordan. But John says, that he baptized *beyond* Jordan:—"These things were done in Bethabara *beyond* Jordan, where John was baptizing."—John i. 28. Again, "Therefore they sought again to take him; but he escaped out of their hand and went away again *beyond* Jordan into the place where John at first baptized, and there he abode." John x. 39, 40. It is indisputably certain, that these three evangelists are speaking in reference to the same transactions, and that there can be no real discrepancy in their statements. How, then; is this apparent discrepancy to be reconciled?—There is one very easy method, and, as far as is



known to the writer, it is the only method. The Greek preposition, *en*, is used with considerable latitude of signification. It often means *within* a place; but it is also used to denote *at* a place, or *near to* a place. Every person, who is acquainted with the Greek language, knows this to be true. Even our English preposition, *in*, has some latitude of signification. But the preposition, *beyond*, and the word answering to it in the Greek, is very definite. It *never means within* a place, *nor can it* be so used. John x. 40 furnishes us with two unanswerable arguments in proof, that John *did not baptize in the river Jordan*. It is there affirmed, that Jesus went into the place where John at first baptized. But, to get into that place, he went *beyond* Jordan. Where then did John baptize? "*Beyond Jordan.*" What is the meaning of the term *beyond*? is it not, *on the other side*? But if it be on the *other side* of the river, it cannot be *in* the river. But where did Christ abide? Certainly in the place where John at first baptized. But surely he did not abide in the stream! I urge this point the more strenuously by reason of the pertinacity, with which immersionists contend, that this illustrious Baptist immersed his disciples in the river Jordan, and that Christians are bound to follow the example of Jesus in *Jordan's rolling waves*! According to the testimony of John the evangelist, it was not in the "rolling waves of Jordan," but on the other side of that noted stream, that the harbinger of Jesus Christ ad-



ministered his baptism. Now I ask any candid sensible man, how the testimony of John can be reconciled with that of Matthew and Mark in any way, but the one I have proposed? In this way it may be fairly and easily done. But it is exceedingly doubtful, whether it can be done, even *forcibly*, in any other. The translation of John's gospel in the passages referred to, cannot be altered. But the Greek text of Matthew and Mark may be fairly and correctly translated, so as to agree with the testimony of John. Let the reader pause, and look at this matter fairly and critically, that he may feel the force of the preceding statements.

According to this slight amendment of the translation (an amendment, too, that is in perfect agreement with the Greek text) the testimony of these evangelists is beautifully coincident. Matthew says, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him *at* (or near to) Jordan." Mark says, "And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were baptized of him *at* (or near to) the river of Jordan." John says, "These things were done in Bethabara *beyond* Jordan, where John was baptizing;" and "He went away again *beyond* Jordan into the place, where John at first baptized, and there he abode."

Must it not, then, be granted, that the weight of evidence is decidedly against the idea, that John administered his ordinance *in the river Jordan*? If so; as far as the river Jordan is

concerned, there is no evidence in favour of immersion. But it may be asked—Do not Matthew and Mark both affirm, that Jesus, when he was baptized, “came up straightway *out of the water*?” In the next essay I will consider this objection.

## THE MODE OF JOHN'S BAPTISM.

“ And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway  
*out of the water.*—Matt. iii. 16.



## ESSAY VIII.

It may be asked—how could Christ go up out of the water, without having been in the water, and how could he have been in the water, if John did not baptize in the river Jordan? In the preceding essay an attempt was made to prove that John did not administer his baptism in the river, but near to it. How is this apparent discrepancy to be reconciled? That the discrepancy is merely apparent is manifest, for it is to be found only in our translation—but not in the Greek text. Every person knows, or ought to know, that the Greek text is the language of inspiration. If a translation be correct, the sentiments are inspired, but the words are not. The literal rendering of the above text is—“ Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway *from* the water.”

In the Greek Testament where the inspired writers intend to express motion either *into a*

*place* or *out of a place*, they use a preposition both *before* the *verb of motion*, and the *noun*, denoting the place, *into which*, or *out of which* the *motion is performed*;—and these prepositions, if not the same, are of the *same import*. But where they intend to express motion merely *to* a place, or *from* a place, there is only one preposition used, and that is *before* the noun. When they intend to express motion upward, or downward from a place, or to a place, there is a preposition used before the verb as well as before the noun. But in this case the prepositions are not the same, nor are they of similar import—for the preposition, that is here used before the verb, expresses the idea of *upward* or *downward*, as the case may be. There is perhaps no rule in any language of more general application than this. I have at different times carefully examined the Greek Testament from first to last, in order to test the correctness of this rule, and from every subsequent examination I have felt an increased conviction of the beauty of this grammatical rule, and of its astonishing universality. I am persuaded that there is not a fair exception to this rule in the New Testament—except in perhaps some two or three passages, where motion out of a place is expressed by the appropriate preposition before the verb only, it being omitted before the noun.

The preposition *cis*, is commonly used in expressing motion merely *to* a place;—but in expressing motion *into* a place, this preposition is doubled, or another of similar import is used.

In expressing motion *from* a place, *ek*, *ex*, or *apo*, is used before the noun;—but, when motion *out of* a place is intended to be expressed, this preposition is doubled, being used before the verb as well as before the noun. In expressing motion *downward to* a place, *kata* is generally used before the verb, and *eis* before the noun. In expressing motion *upward from* a place, *ana* is commonly used before the verb, and *ex* or *apo* before the noun. The correctness of these remarks can be easily tested by an examination of the Greek Testament. On a careful examination I have observed upwards of one hundred and eighty passages in the Greek Testament, where it was clearly the design of the writer to express motion *into* a place; and in all these places the preposition is doubled, according to the grammatical rule above stated. I have observed about one hundred and seventeen examples of motion *out of* a place, where the same rule is observed with astonishing exactitude.—About two hundred and thirty passages may be found of motion merely *to* a place, and about ninety-five of motion *from* a place, where the same regard is paid to this admirable grammatical rule. In Mark vii. 15–23, in the brief space of nine verses, we have five examples of motion into a place, and four examples of motion out of a place, which most beautifully and forcibly illustrate this rule. In John xx. 3–8, the short space of six verses, we have three examples of motion to a place, namely, to the sepulchre of Jesus, and three examples of motion into the sepulchre, af-



fording a beautiful illustration of this universal grammatical rule. The preposition, *eis*, is used before the noun in all these six cases; but it is used before the verb of motion in only three of the cases, where it was manifestly the design of the writer to express motion into the sepulchre. In Mark v. 38, 39, we find one example of motion *to* a place, and also one example of motion *into* the same place. Here, as in the other instance, the same grammatical rule is observed. In John xviii. 28, we again find an example of each kind. In Acts iii. 1-8, we have an example of motion *upward to* the temple, where the preposition, *ana*, is used before the verb, and *eis* before the noun. We have in the same passage as many as three examples of motion into the temple, where *eis* is used both before the verb and the noun. In Luke ii. 4, there is an example of motion *upward from* a place, where the same verb and the same preposition are used, as in Matthew iii. 16, to express the motion of Jesus in *going up from* the river Jordan. In Acts xiii. 31, and xxv. 1, and also in Rev. vii. 2, similar examples may be found, where the intention of the writer must have been to express upward motion *from* a place, and not *out of* a place.

As far as I have examined the Septuagint, I find the same rule to be scrupulously observed. As examples of motion into a place, the following texts may be consulted:—Gen. vii. 7-16, and xii. 11, 14, 15, and xix. 3. Ex. xii. 23, and xiv. 23. Josh. ii. 1, 3, and iii. 15. The examples in Ex. xiv. 22, 23, and in Josh. iii. 15,



are worthy of special attention. In Ex. xiv. 22, 23, an account is given of the Israelites and the pursuing Egyptians going *into* the Red Sea. In each case the preposition, *eis*, is used both before the verb of motion and the noun. In Josh. iii. 15, an account is given of the Israelites *going into* that ever memorable river—Jordan. Here *eis* is used before the verb of motion, and *epi* before the noun. In Gen. ii. 16, and xvii. 22, and also in Josh. iv. 19, we may find examples of motion *upward from* a place. These passages are worthy of special notice. In Gen. ii. 6, it is said—“There went up a mist from the earth.” In this text *ana* is used before the verb, and *ek* before the noun; the same verb and preposition that are used in Acts viii. 39, to express the action of Philip and the Eunuch in *coming up from* the water. In Gen. xvii. 22, it is said—“And God went up from Abraham.” Here the verb and the preposition are the same that are used in Matt. iii. 16, to express the motion of Jesus in *going up from* the Jordan. In Josh. iv. 19, there is the same verb and the same prepositions that are used in Acts viii. 39, in the case of Philip and the eunuch. But it is certain that motion *out of* a place is not intended to be expressed here, for the people had already crossed the Jordan; and the idea intended to be conveyed manifestly is—that of *motion up the bank* of Jordan. If not—why were not the same verb and prepositions used that were employed just before in verses 16, 17, and 18, as often as three times to express the motion of the priests in

going up out of the same river? These are fair examples of motion *out of* a place, and in each of these texts the preposition, *ek*, is used both before the verb of motion and the noun. Other examples of motion out of a place may be found in Gen. viii. 10, 18, 19, and xii. 1, 4, and Dan. iii. 6. In all these places that beautiful and expressive rule of the Greek language is carefully observed.

We have now produced examples both from the Septuagint and from the New Testament, in which the same verb and prepositions are used as in Matt. iii. 16, and in Acts viii. 39, and where it was certainly the intention of the writers to express motion, not *out of* a place, but *upward from* a place. It is perhaps impossible to produce one text in the New Testament, that is a fair exception to this remark. Let the reader consult the places referred to, and decide otherwise if he can. What proof is there, then, that Jesus, or Philip and the eunuch came up *out of* the water? But it may be said that Luke informs us that "Philip and the eunuch went down *into* the water," and of course it was necessary for them to come up *out of* the water. In reply to this objection, permit me to say, that the text in Acts viii. 38, furnishes a fair example of motion *downward* to a place. In this text *kata* is used before the verb, and *eis* before the noun. As far as this Greek text is concerned, there is no evidence whatever that Philip and the eunuch either went into the water or came out of the water. The literal, and critically

correct translation is—"They went down both *to* the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up *from* the water." Here then is motion down the bank to the stream, and motion from the stream up the bank again. More than this the inspired text does not express. Other examples of motion downward to a place may be found in Luke x. 30, and xviii. 14. John ii. 12. Acts vii. 15, and xiv. 25, and xvi. 18, and xxv. 6. In all these passages there is the same compound verb, and the same preposition. It may not be improper to remark, that it is impossible to express motion from one country *into* another, from one city or town *into* another, or from one house *into* another, unless the houses or places be *contiguous*. The first motion must be *to* the place,—then the place may be *entered*, but certainly not before. This will apply to country, city, house, or river. But there is one example of motion downward to a place, which cannot be misunderstood, or explained away. This is in Mark xiii. 15.—"And let him that is on the house top not go down *into* his house, neither *enter therein* to take any thing out of his house." Here we have the same verb and preposition as in the case of Philip and the eunuch; and indeed in all the examples referred to, the verb and preposition are the same. But in this text it is manifest that the first motion is not *into* the house—for that is expressed afterwards by an appropriate verb and preposition. Is it not impossible for a man to enter a house when he is

already in it? Then evidently the first motion, intended in this direction, is from the house top down to the ground. The reader will observe, that this text is translated in the same way with the one respecting Philip and the eunuch—but evidently not with literal correctness.

In concluding this essay, let us take a brief review of the points that have been established. We have seen, in the consideration of John's baptism, that it was not administered in the river Jordan, but on its border; for John the evangelist positively asserts that John baptized *beyond* Jordan; and with this the testimony of Matthew and Mark may fairly, and with strict grammatical propriety, be shown to agree. We have also seen that, according to a well established rule in the Greek language, it is manifest that Jesus, after his baptism, went up the bank of the river Jordan, and not out of the stream, as it appears in our translation. Indeed, how can this translation be reconciled with the positive assertion of the evangelist John? There is no evidence, therefore, that Jesus was in the river—much less that he was immersed. Nor is there any evidence that John immersed any one—but evidence to the contrary, for he baptized *with water*. Indeed, it is impossible, as has been shown, that he could have immersed the vast multitudes that attended his ministry, and received his baptism. His baptizing in Enon near to Salim is no evidence that he immersed. The crowds that attended his ministry would require a place of *much water*. Moreover, it may not be

amiss to remark, that the expression "*much water*" may denote a number of rivulets rather than a deep stream. Is not this idea in agreement with the expression of the Greek text? Is it not also in agreement with the history of that country? But, be this as it may, it would be a matter of convenience to be near a full supply of water; and, to suppose that it was used for the purpose of immersion, is altogether gratuitous.



## EXPOSITION OF

Romans vi. 3—6, and Colossians ii. 11, 12.

“—Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

“—Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.”



## ·ESSAY IX.

THESE two portions of the word of God were both written by the same apostle, and they certainly contain a striking unity of sentiment. The language is highly figurative, and beautifully instructive. Allusion is made to three important periods in the history of man;—his death—his burial—and his resurrection. In the spiritual world there is the death and burial of the old man, and the resurrection and life of the new man. Christian baptism denotes this all important spiritual renovation. To effect this renovation is the office work of the Holy Spirit. But it is done in the name of Jesus Christ, and for his sake.—John xv. 26, and xvi. 14. The Holy



Spirit conceals himself, while he makes a saving manifestation of Christ to the soul. Jesus Christ is the most prominent object in the economy of grace. Hence, says the apostle, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i. 30. Hence, too, the beautifully expressive language of the same apostle, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.—Gal. iii. 27.

Let us now give a careful attention to the meaning of the text. To be "baptized into Christ," denotes entire subjection to his authority. It is to take upon us his *name* and his *yoke*. To be "baptized into his death," is to become dead to sin. He died to condemn sin, and to open up a way of escape from it. The true believer enters into the design of his death, and becomes conformable to it by forsaking sin, and thus becoming dead to it. To be "buried with him by baptism into death," is to have the body of sin, the old man, which is crucified, removed from us, as a dead body is removed from sight by burial. Here, then, is a beautiful train of thought—living to Christ—dying to sin—and being delivered from "the body of death," or "the old man," that is crucified. In the natural world the man dies—is buried—and rises again. In the spiritual world it is the body of sin, that is put to death, and buried, or removed out of the way. This dead body is not expected to rise again, and survive the ruins of death. Here the analogy entirely

fails. In the natural world the resurrection body is raised out of the body that died. It is the same body, but gloriously changed. In the spiritual world the new man does not arise out of the old man. Here the body, that is crucified, and buried, does not rise and live again. Certainly the trees of righteousness do not germinate, and grow from the dead plants of sin! What! can sin produce holiness? Is it sin itself, that is changed by the Spirit of God into holiness? If not, then the body, that is put to death, and buried, is not expected to rise again. The new creature is nurtured and grows, not in the soil of nature, but in that of grace.

If these remarks are just and correct, it follows, that the baptism, here spoken of, is not water baptism, but the baptism of the Spirit. But if so, then these two passages have nothing to do in deciding the mode of water baptism. That the apostle is not alluding to water baptism is abundantly manifest from the following considerations:

1. If allusion be made to water baptism in the text, in Rom. vi. 3—6, the allusion must be three-fold;—"Baptized into Christ,"—"Baptized into his death,"—"Buried with him by baptism into death."

But can the expression,—"*Baptized into Christ*,"—mean water baptism? What says the apostle Paul?—"As many as have been baptized into Christ, *have put on Christ*." Now to "*put on Christ*," is certainly to imbibe his Spirit, and bear his moral likeness. But is this, and water

baptism one, and the same thing? Is there no spirituality in religion? Is there nothing of the power of divine love? Is there nothing of the energy of a living faith? Is it all outward and visible and shadowy? And does this fit the soul for heaven? Is this the character of angels and ransomed spirits? Is it the moral character of God? All, except infidels, are prepared zealously to exclaim, no, no, utterly impossible! Well, then, to "*put on Christ*," is not the same as to *receive water baptism*. But if not; then to be "baptized into Christ," is not water baptism. But if this be not water baptism, then manifestly the apostle is not, in the text alluded to, discoursing of this kind of baptism.

Can the expression, "Baptized into his death," mean water baptism? Christ died the death of the cross. What resemblance is there between water baptism and crucifixion? What resemblance especially between immersion, and crucifixion? If Christ was baptized on the cross, it was with his own blood. His body must have been sprinkled with the blood, that issued from his head, his hands, and his side. But can this be the meaning of the expression? Does it not mean, that as Christ died on account of sin, and with the design to condemn it, and make atonement for it, so the sinner, who is enlightened and renewed, or baptized by the Holy Spirit, enters into the design of Christ's death, approves of his atonement, and relies on it, and *dies unto sin*!

But can the expression, "Buried with him

by baptism into death," mean water baptism? "Buried into death:"—into what kind of death? Surely not the death of the *body*! But it is the body, that is buried in baptism by immersion. If, in baptism, the living man is not buried in the water to the extinction of natural life, does it mean that this baptismal burial results in the *death* of the body of sin, the crucifixion of the old man? It surely must mean either the death of the *man*, or the death of the *body* of *sin*. But is the destruction of the body of sin effected by water baptism? If so, it is baptismal regeneration with a witness! What is it, that is *buried*? Is it the living man? Or is it the dead body? If it is the living man, he is buried into *death*! But surely it is the dead body, that is buried. But what is that? Let the apostle answer: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed." It is worthy of notice, that whatever the nature of this death and burial may be, it is continuous. "We are buried with him by baptism INTO DEATH." Here the BURIAL INTO DEATH, and WALKING in NEWNESS of LIFE are consentaneous, and commensurate. This, then, is a mysterious, and a powerful baptism, not only in its inception, but also in its progress.

There is another expression, used by the apostle in this connexion, of a similar import, that shows very clearly that he is not treating of water baptism. "For if we have been *planted together* in the *likeness* of his *death*, we shall be also in the *likeness* of his *resurrection*." Can

this be water baptism? What! planted in the water! planted, too, so as to resemble the crucifixion of Christ! planted, too, so as to remain, and grow till the morning of the resurrection! And shall *all* that have been *planted in water*, certainly rise to the resurrection of life! for doubtless the *planting* and the *resurrection* are intimately and inseparably connected, and commensurate.

To "be dead," is to be "freed from sin," for the apostle says, "He that is dead is freed from sin." Therefore, this baptism into Christ—this baptism into his death—this burial with him by baptism into death—and this planting together in the likeness of his death—all these expressions are figurative and spiritual, and denote substantially the same thing—the renewal of man's moral nature, and his consequent death to sin. This needful and glorious reformation is accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the term *baptism* is used, because the baptismal water is the appointed symbol of his sacred influence.

There is another thought in this connexion, that cannot have escaped the observation of the attentive reader, and that is, the intimate connexion between CHRIST and the SUBJECT OF THIS BAPTISM. Every expression that is used, shows this. "Baptized *into Christ*"—"Baptized *into his death*"—"Buried *with him* by baptism into death"—"Planted *together* in the *likeness of his death*"—so also in the *likeness of his resurrection*"—"Our old man is crucified *with him*."



“If we be *dead with Christ*, we shall also *live with him*.” Is this wondrous union effected by water baptism? Is it not most unquestionably of a moral and spiritual nature? Can it be a mere shadow—a mere type—a mere tangible symbol?

2. But that it is the baptism of the Spirit, that is here alluded to, and not that of water, is manifest, from the kindred text in Col. ii. 11, 12.—“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision, made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.” This *circumcision* must be *spiritual*, for it is made *without hands*—it results in *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*—and it is the *circumcision of Christ*. This is doubtless “the circumcision that is of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.”—Rom. ii. 29. But if the circumcision is spiritual, so must also be the baptism, that is connected with it. To deny this, would be to violate every correct principle of interpretation. But there is another remarkable expression in the same connexion. Whatever kind of burial it may be, that is here mentioned, it must be of the same nature with the resurrection that follows. Look at the language, “*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him*.” But what is the nature of this resurrection, and how is it effected! “By the faith of the operation of God.” Here is a



divine agency employed, and here is a living and operative faith as its result. But is it by divine agency that the subject of water baptism is raised up out of the watery grave? I trow not. I presume that this resurrection is generally effected by the strength of the administrator's arm! Consequently it cannot be water baptism, to which the apostle has reference in this text. If not, then the expression, "Buried with him in baptism," has nothing to do with the mode of administering this ordinance. Behold the beauty, and the inseparable connexion of the different parts of this text. Who are they that have risen with Christ by the faith of the operation of God? They that are "buried with him in baptism." But who are "buried with him in baptism?" They that are "circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." How beautifully do these texts correspond with another in this same epistle! "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."—Col. iii. 1—4.

3. The correctness of the train of thought advanced above, will appear the more clearly, if we consider that the Greek verb *thapto*, to bury, denotes the disposal of a dead body in any man-

ner, according to the custom of the nation or the age. Some nations have disposed of the dead body by burning—others by embalming—others again by interring. But let the custom be what it may, *thapto* denotes the disposal of the dead body according to that custom. As, therefore, the custom among Jews, Romans, Egyptians, and other nations, is various; the word *thapto* cannot denote any settled and invariable mode. It is known that the body of Jesus was embalmed, and deposited in a room, hewn in a rock.

Now, consider, that it is not the living man, but the dead body of sin, that is buried, and that the term “buried” merely expresses the removal and disposal of a dead body, without definitely specifying the method; consider this, then tell me where is the ground in those texts to support the notion of baptism by immersion?

4. Water baptism was not appointed to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Lord’s Supper was appointed to represent his death, and the Christian Sabbath is a memorial of his resurrection. But water baptism was appointed to represent the work of the Holy Spirit. It is worthy of special consideration, that there are only two sacraments belonging to the New Testament—baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. Now, we know that Christ appointed the eucharist as a memorial of his death. In this institution, the bread represents the body, and the wine represents the blood of our crucified Lord. Here, then, we have a full representation of

the atonement, the special work of Christ; and the Christian Sabbath is an emblem of his resurrection. But what has been appointed to represent the work of the Holy Spirit, unless it be Christian baptism? The work of the Spirit is doubtless as needful and important as the work of Christ. It is this that renders the atonement available. It is this that applies the gospel remedy. The remedy is adequate and glorious. But the sinner rejects it. The death of Christ, and, indeed, his whole work, would have been utterly unavailing in the business of salvation, without the office work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit as truly formed a part of the divine counsel, and is as indispensable to the economy of grace, as the incarnation, or the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. And is there no gospel institution, no sacrament appointed to represent this work? Is the eucharist appointed to represent the death of Christ, and the Christian Sabbath, his resurrection? But is there nothing appointed to represent the no less important work of the ever-blessed Spirit? This may do for infidels, baptized or unbaptized, who do not believe in the work of the Holy Spirit. But it will not do for Christians, who have been born of the Spirit, and who are depending on his influences to fit them for heaven. But if baptism was appointed to represent the work of the Spirit, then, it surely could not have been appointed to symbolize the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. What more can be needed to memorialize his death and resurrection, than the eucharist, and the

Christian Sabbath? As to the mere burial of Christ, that is not, strictly speaking, a part of his work. That belongs neither to his *action* nor to his *passion*. The atonement was complete, when he expired on the cross. He could as certainly have risen from the dead without burial, as with it. The same body that was crucified, was resuscitated; and this was not owing to the embalmment or the entombment, but to the purpose, and to the power of God.

But, that water baptism was intended to symbolize the work of the Spirit, is evident, from the fact that water is in the Scriptures the emblem of the Spirit, and that the *work* of the Spirit is called his baptism. But the baptism of the Spirit is performed by sprinkling, or pouring, and not by immersion.

How comprehensive and significant are the two sacraments of the New Testament! They unitedly represent the whole undivided gospel remedy—the eucharist—the special work of Christ; and baptism—the special work of the Spirit. Hence, says the beloved disciple, “This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.”—1 John v. 6. The blood makes atonement—the water is the emblem of purification by the Spirit.

## BAPTISM AND IMMERSION NOT SYNONYMOUS.

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ESSAY X.

IMMERSIONISTS contend that baptism means *immersion*, and that the word ought to be thus translated, wherever it occurs. Hence the recent translation of the Bible by the Baptists, in which they have strictly observed this rule. But is this view correct? The meaning of the term baptism, when used to denote a Christian ordinance, must be ascertained from the New Testament. Do the writers of the New Testament mean immersion when they use the term, baptism? To ascertain this fairly, we must consider the circumstances, the occasion, and the allusions, when this term is used.

1. Let us test this matter by the account that is given of John's baptism. I have already shown that it was utterly impossible for John to have immersed the vast multitude that he baptized during the short period of his ministry. But let us take another passing view of this matter.—The evangelist John says—"Jesus went again *beyond* Jordan, *into* the place where John at first baptized, and there he abode." John x. 40. Now



let us follow the Baptist rule of translation.—Where did Jesus abide? In the place where John at first immersed! And where was that? *Beyond* Jordan. Again, Jesus says that John baptized with water. Acts i. 5. Did John immerse with water? Then the water was the instrument by which the immersion was performed. We may then fairly ask—If John baptized *with* water, *into what* was the immersion performed? Every body knows, that to immerse is to *dip, plunge*, or put *under* water. Did John thus baptize? What! he dipped his disciples in water, and he performed this dipping by water! Then he certainly used a machine that was propelled by water! Let this suffice for John's baptism.

2. Let us next consider the daily purifications of the Jews. In Mark vii. 3, 4, we read that “the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, (*baptisontai*,) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (*baptismous*) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables.” Did the Pharisees, and all the Jews, immerse themselves in water before eating? Certainly not—they merely washed their hands.—This is what the evangelist Mark here affirms. Matthew affirms the same thing. Chap. xv. 2. But, having washed their hands merely, they were said to be *baptized*. But most assuredly they were not *immersed*. To suppose it, is to



contradict both Matthew and Mark.—It then follows, according to the statement of Matthew and Mark, that baptism does not mean immersion. Are not Matthew and Mark good and competent witnesses in a matter of this kind? But we have another true and competent witness to the same fact, and that is the evangelist Luke. This witness, speaking of Jesus, says, (in chap. xi. 37, 38,) “A certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him; and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (ebaptisthe) before dinner.” Now, be it noticed and remembered, that it is not the *hands* that are said to be baptized, but the *persons themselves*. But were the persons immersed? These three witnesses affirm that they were not. They say that they merely washed their hands. Having done this, they were baptized—but certainly not immersed. Then it follows fairly, that baptism does not mean immersion. But the Greek reader will observe, that the washing of “cups, pots, brazen vessels, and tables,” is called *baptismous*. Were these things immersed? What! *tables* washed by immersion? If not, the term baptism, as used by the evangelist, does not mean immersion.

3. The purifications practised by the people of Israel under the Old Testament dispensation, in pursuance of divine instructions, were performed—not by immersion—but by having the purifying blood or water sprinkled or poured upon the persons, or things, to be purified. The

evangelist John informs us *how* these purifications were performed. "And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing about three firkins apiece." John ii. 6. The apostle Paul, speaking of these purifications, calls them *diaphoroi baptismois*—divers baptisms. Heb. ix. 10. "Which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." It is utterly unavailing and useless to deny, that these divers washings, or baptisms, are the purifications enjoined under the Mosaic ritual. The apostle settles this point definitively, and forever. In verses 12–14 he says, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" Again, in verses 19–22, he says, "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and *sprinkled* both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover, he *sprinkled* likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." The matter in hand here is plain, and brought into a short compass. The purifications here alluded to were performed by *sprinkling*—and yet the apostle Paul calls them *divers baptisms*. There is absolutely no way to escape from this. And will immersionists still affirm that the term *baptism* in the New Testament means *immersion*, and ought to be so translated! Then immersion and sprinkling mean the same thing, and this controversy is at an end!

4. How were the children of Israel baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea? 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. They were certainly *under* the cloud—but were they *dipped into it*? if not, were they immersed? What! not dipped into the cloud, and still immersed in it! what is the meaning of the term immersion? Reader, pause, and reflect, and ascertain the precise meaning of that term, and then proceed with the investigation. Suppose the cloud had fallen on the children of Israel as they were passing through the Red sea, and had completely encompassed them, would they have been, in that case, *immersed* in the cloud? They would have been encompassed by it, but certainly not immersed in it. To immerse, is to *dip* or to *plunge*. The apostle Paul understood the meaning of language, and he used it correctly. When he speaks of the action of a cloud, descending and encompassing, his language is very different. "Wherefore seeing we are *compassed about* with so great a *cloud* of wit-

nesses." How, then, were the children of Israel baptized in the cloud? Most unquestionably it could not have been by immersion, unless they were *plunged upward* into the cloud! for the apostle says that they were *under* the cloud. Let the reader consult the 77th Psalm, which has a manifest allusion to the passage of the children of Israel through the sea, and he may very easily comprehend how they were baptized. There we find the following language: "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid; the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron." What a beautiful and graphic description of a thunder-storm! What a copious *shower*! and what a thorough *sprinkling* did it impart to Israel's moving hosts!

But how were the people baptized in the *sea*? They passed through on dry ground. Let the reader consult Ex. xiv. 21-29, and he will find that the baptizing on that occasion was not by immersion. It is granted, that there was a company immersed on that signal occasion; but it was not the children of Israel. How could they be immersed in the sea, when they were travelling on

dry ground? Baptism in this case, then, cannot possibly mean immersion. But when we consider that a strong east wind blew all that night, and that the waters of the sea stood like walls on the right and on the left of the children of Israel, we may easily perceive how they were completely sprinkled by the sprays of water from the surrounding watery walls.

Will the reader now have the kindness to review this essay, and carefully to consider the circumstances and the occasions above referred to, where the term baptism is used, and decide for himself whether it be possible that immersion could have been practised on any of these occasions. But if it could not, then the term baptism, as used in the New Testament, does not mean immersion. Consequently, the Baptist argument, drawn from the supposed meaning of the term baptism, is effectually destroyed. But more on this subject in the next number.



## BAPTISM AND IMMERSION NOT SYNONYMOUS.



## ESSAY XI.

IN the preceding remarks, I attempted to show that the term baptism does not mean immersion, when applied to the ordinance administered by John—because he baptized *with* water, not *in* water; nor does it mean immersion, when used to designate the daily purifications of the Jews, for that would contradict the testimony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke; nor does it mean immersion, when used to designate the purifications practised by the children of Israel, under the Old Testament dispensation—for these purifications were performed by sprinkling or pouring: nor, finally, does it mean immersion, when applied to the children of Israel passing under the cloud, and through the sea—for that is absolutely impossible. Then the affirmation that the term baptism, when used in the New Testament, means immersion, is without foundation, and cannot be fairly and truthfully supported. It is absolutely in the face of Scripture authority, and cannot possibly be shown to be otherwise. I now proceed to show, that these remarks will



apply with great force and propriety to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The peculiar work of the Spirit in enlightening the mind, purifying the heart, and purging the conscience from dead works, to serve the living God, is called his *baptism*. But how is this baptism performed? Not by *immersion*, most assuredly. Every expression that is used, represents his sacred influence as coming down upon the soul. It is *poured out*, it is *shed forth*, it *comes upon*, it *falls upon*, the soul. The language used by the apostle Peter, is plain and pointed: "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell* on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the words of the Lord, how that he said, John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." Acts xi. 15, 16. In view of this text, will any one affirm that the baptism of the Spirit is performed by immersion? But if it is not, then the term baptism does not mean immersion. Again, in view of this text, will any one affirm that water baptism is not the sign of the baptism of the Spirit? If one is not the sign of the other, why are they used in this immediate connexion; and why is the work of the Spirit called his baptism? How pointed and how relevant are the words in the preceding chapter! "While Peter yet spake these words, the *Holy Ghost fell* on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision, which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost. Then answered Peter, Can any man for-

bid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Acts x. 44-47. Let us here notice, 1st, the *method* of the Spirit's bestowment. "The Holy Ghost *fell* on all them which heard the word." "On the Gentiles was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost." 2d. This bestowment or baptism of the Spirit is urged by the apostle as a reason why water baptism should be administered; and this, too, with manifest propriety, because the water is the appointed sign of the Spirit. 3d. The water was to be brought, and applied, as appears from the question, "Can any man *forbid* water, that these should not be baptized? The propriety of this, too, is very evident—for if the water is the sign of the Spirit, and the Spirit is applied to the soul, the water should be applied to the body; and the application in the one case should resemble that in the other—otherwise the intention of the sign is destroyed.

Now, is it unquestionable that the work of the Holy Spirit is called his baptism? Is it also unquestionable that this baptism is performed by the falling—the sprinkling—the pouring out—the shedding forth—or the coming of his influence on the soul? Is it not, then, as unquestionable, that the term baptism does not mean immersion? Let us translate a few passages according to the Baptist rule: "John truly *immersed* with water, but ye shall be *immersed* with the Holy Ghost." "Know ye not, that so many of us as were *immersed into Jesus Christ*, were im-

*mersed into his death!* Therefore we are buried with him by *immersion into death.*"!!—This, let it be observed, is not immersion *into water*, but *into death!!!*

Let us now notice the instances of Christian baptism recorded in the New Testament. The first instance of the administration of this ordinance was on the day of Pentecost. But how was it then administered? It could not, I suppose, have been by immersion. There was not time, nor was there a place, to administer the ordinance by immersion. When the gift of tongues was bestowed on the disciples, the matter was rumoured abroad throughout the city of Jerusalem. The crowds in that city that were then attending on the feast of Pentecost, pressed to the room where the disciples were convened, and were utterly astonished when they heard them speak the wonderful works of God in languages they had never learned. In that vast assembly were persons from fifteen or sixteen different nations, speaking as many different languages—and yet each one heard in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. When Peter arose to address the multitude, it was the third hour of the day, answering to our 9 o'clock. He must have delivered as many addresses as there were nations assembled, using different languages: else how could they all have heard and understood? Each address must have been long enough to exhibit to their minds the evidences of their guilt and danger; else how could the solemn

impression have been made upon their minds? for the Holy Spirit works through the instrumentality of divine truth. Peter's address, that is recorded, is not short; and are we to presume that the whole of it is recorded? After the solemn inquiry—"Men and brethren, what shall we do?"—Peter continued his address, and explained the way of salvation, and urged home upon the assembly the motives of the gospel.—This part of the address could not have been very short—for the sacred historian, after recording a part of the address, remarks, that "*with many other words* did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Now consider, that in all this he was addressing fifteen or sixteen different nations, using as many different languages. Can any reasonable man suppose that much of the day could remain after these transactions? But during the short remainder of that day, three thousand persons were baptized, and added to the church.—And how many administrators were present on that occasion? Read the last chapter of Matthew, where the commission is given, and you will learn that the eleven apostles alone were present, and commissioned. Then read the history of the transactions on the day of Pentecost, and you will find the same eleven acting in pursuance of their invested authority. "But Peter, standing up with the *eleven*, lifted up his voice, and said unto them." Could these eleven have immersed three thousand in that short piece of a day? Impossible—utterly impossible! But

*where* could they have immersed them? Surely not in the pools of the city. They were not intended for such a purpose; nor were they adapted to it. They were also in possession of the enemies of Christ and of his religion. There is only one stream of any note about Jerusalem, and that is the brook Kidron. According to Horne's Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures, the brook Kidron is dry, except in winter, and after heavy rains. According to the same authority, from the middle of April to the middle of September there is neither thunder nor rain in that country. According to Brown, the author of the Bible Dictionary, the brook Kidron receives all the rivulets about Jerusalem—consequently, when it is dry, they must be dry. Now, let us consider that the feast of Pentecost was fifty days later than that of the Passover. But the Passover came on the 14th of Nisan, or the 1st of April. Of course, the feast of Pentecost would occur toward the last of May. At that time the brook Kidron, and all the rivulets about Jerusalem were dry. Where then were the three thousand immersed on the day of Pentecost?—Does the sacred historian speak of their immersion? Did they leave the room where they were assembled? Where is the proof? But, had they left the room, where would they have gone?—There was not time for them to withdraw. There was no place of retirement for immersion. There is no intimation that they did retire. Consequently, there is proof to the contrary. There were present but eleven administrators. They



must have baptized them by companies. Then, perhaps, was fulfilled the prophecy—"So shall he *sprinkle many nations*."—Isa. lii. 15.

In conclusion, let me ask, how can this prophecy be fulfilled, except in the administration of the ordinance of baptism? Or how can the prophecy of Ezekiel, in reference to the conversion of the Jews to Christianity, be fulfilled, unless it be by the administration of this ordinance? Ezek. xxxvi. 25. "Then will I *sprinkle clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean," &c. Is not baptism the only gospel ordinance in which water is used? But should any contend that this clean water represents the Holy Spirit; this merely establishes the point for which I am contending—that water baptism is the sign of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and that the scriptural mode of administration is by sprinkling or pouring.



## BAPTISM AND IMMERSION NOT SYNONYMOUS.

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ESSAY XII.

IN my last essay, I attempted to prove, that the *three thousand* that were baptized and added to the church on the day of Pentecost, were not immersed—because there was neither time nor place for the administration of the ordinance in this way; and, as far as we can learn from the inspired history of that transaction, the ordinance was administered in the room, where the baptism of the Holy Ghost occurred.

Let us now notice the other cases of baptism, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The next case is that of the eunuch—Acts viii. 36–39. ‘And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water,

the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip." This is the case of baptism that is familiar to every Baptist in the land, and much relied on to prove immersion. But does the historian say, that Philip *immersed* the eunuch? By no means, he only says that he baptized him. But is not their going down into the water, and their coming up out of the water, proof of immersion? If it be, then Philip was immersed, as well as the eunuch, for they *both* went down, and came up. One might affirm, that the ordinance in this case was administered by sprinkling or pouring; another might affirm, that it was administered by immersion. But where is the proof of either? All will grant that it *might have been* administered by sprinkling or pouring. Then it *cannot be certain* that it was administered by immersion. But is it PROBABLE that it was administered by immersion? A little candid and intelligent reflection will, perhaps, lead us to think that it was not. Consider, then, the character of the country through which they are passing. The eunuch was on his way from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, passing through the *desert* of Gaza. Every person knows that water does not abound in deserts. The language used on this occasion shows, that if the water here spoken of was a streamlet at all, it must have been very inconsiderable—so much so, as to require the attention of Philip to be called to it by the eunuch. "See, here is water!" But that which is the most convincing to my mind, that immersion was not practised on this occasion, is the fact, that according to the gram-

matical rule of the Greek language, referred to, and supported in a former essay, there is no evidence from the Greek text that they were in the water at all ; but evidence to the contrary. The Greek text merely conveys the idea of motion downward to the water, and of motion upward from the water. But if they were not in the water, there could have been no immersion. But whether they were in the water or not, there is no proof of immersion. Immersion cannot be proved from this case, unless it can be shown, that the ordinance could have been administered in no other way. But *who* will undertake to prove that !

The next instance of baptism which is recorded in the Acts, is that of the apostle Paul.—Acts ix. 17–19. “ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house ; and, putting his hands on him, said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales ; and he received his sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened.”

This is, doubtless, the most important case of Christian baptism that is recorded in the Scriptures ; and it must be well worth our serious consideration. Let us, then, consider the following facts. Paul was at this time in the house of Judas of Damascus, in a state of great debility. He was overcome and prostrated by the solemn

visitation, on the way. He had spent three days in utter blindness, and total abstinence. On receiving sight, he arose, and was baptized, and, having taken nourishment, he was strengthened. Now, where did all this take place? Certainly, according to the history, in the house of Judas of Damascus. The history is remarkably brief, and connected. There is the same evidence that Paul was baptized in the house of Judas, that there is of his receiving sight and taking nourishment in that house. To suppose that he left the house, is to *make history*. If we are bound to credit the inspired account, we are not at liberty to suppose that he left the house before he was baptized. The history informs us, not only that he was baptized in the house, but that he was standing on his feet at the time of the transaction. The Greek word, translated "arose," is *anastas*. Every Greek scholar knows, that this is the second indefinite participle from the verb *anistemi*. It may be rendered, *rising up*—*having arisen*—or *standing up*. In the Acts of the Apostles, this word is translated twice, *arise*—eight times, *arose*—and four times, *stood up*. It never conveys the idea of motion from a place, but always the action of rising up, or standing. It is therefore manifest and indisputable, that Paul the apostle was standing on his feet, when he was baptized. Then, was he *immersed*? It would have been as difficult for Paul to have been immersed, standing on his feet in a private dwelling, as it would have been for the children of Israel to have been immersed in the *cloud* that was *over*

*them!* But will any one affirm that Paul might have gone out of the house to some stream, for the purpose of immersion? In reply, it may be said, that such affirmation is not giving credit to the account of the INSPIRED historian—but it is making NEW history! Why suppose this, when the sacred historian informs us that he was standing up? Why suppose this, when we are informed of the apostle's debilitated condition, and that he was not strengthened, till he had taken nourishment, which was after his baptism? Why suppose this, when this same apostle, afterwards, called the PURIFICATIONS that were practised under the Old Testament by SPRINKLING or POURING, so many *baptisms*?—Heb. ix. 10—14, 19—22. Could he have forgotten his own baptism? And if the word baptism means immersion, why did this inspired apostle, who well understood the meaning of the term, and the design of the ordinance, call the purifications of the Old Testament church so many baptisms, when he well knew that they were performed by sprinkling? But if the apostle Paul was not immersed, but was baptized standing on his feet, then is not this a *safe and Scriptural* mode? Was it not of the utmost importance, that this apostle should be correctly inducted into the Christian church? He was chosen and ordained as the great apostle of the Gentiles. He travelled extensively, and laboured successfully. He laid the foundation of numerous churches. Was it not all important that he should well understand the principles of the gospel and the design of its



ordinances? Did Ananias, in the full tide of heaven's instructions and influences, understand his duty, and faithfully perform it? Surely, then, the apostle Paul was baptized in due Christian form, and correctly inducted into the Christian church. Who, then, will presume to say, that Christians, who have been baptized after the manner of this great apostle, are nevertheless *unbaptized*, and out of the pale of the visible church, and ought to be *excluded* from the table of the Lord!

The next case of baptism that is recorded, is that of Lydia and her household. Acts xvi. 14, 15. Nothing is said in this case, by which to determine the mode. It is admitted, that mention is made of a river, in the preceding verse. But there is no intimation of Lydia and her household going into the river. It is merely possible that they might have been baptized in the river—but it is as possible, and more probable, that they were baptized in the place where the heart of Lydia was opened, so that she gave attention to the word preached, just as the three thousand were on the day of Pentecost. The language used, in mentioning the river, is worthy of attention. It is said, “where PRAYER was wont to be made;” not where *baptism* was wont to be administered.

There is one instance of baptism, that I have inadvertently overlooked, and that is the case in the house of Cornelius. Acts x. 44–48. The reader will please turn to this passage, and read it. How was the ordinance administered



on this occasion? Surely not by immersion, as appears from the following considerations:—1st. From the reason assigned by the apostle Peter, for the administration of baptism. He argued the propriety of their being baptized with water, from the fact that they had been baptized with the Holy Ghost. But how were they baptized with the Holy Ghost? “The Holy Ghost fell on them—the gift of the Holy Ghost was poured out.” How, then, ought the sign to have been applied? Let common sense answer this question. 2d. But the language used by the apostle, clearly indicates, not that persons should go to the water for the purpose of immersion, but that the water should be brought, and applied to the persons. “Can any man FORBID water?” What is the plain meaning of this language? If the water was to be used, was it not to be brought? What! “forbid water,” by forbidding the people from going to it! Is that the common sense view? But if the water was brought, was it *applied to the people*? or were they immersed in it? Let common sense answer this question, and settle this case of baptism.

The last case mentioned in the Acts, is that of the jailer and his family. Acts xvi. 19–40. Let the reader consult this passage carefully. He will find that there were at least two rooms belonging to the prison. This will explain the *going in* and the *coming out*, that is mentioned. Where were the jailer and his family baptized? Most assuredly within the walls of the prison, for the following reasons:—1st. It was between

midnight and day that the baptism took place. Of course it was a most unsuitable hour for the jailer and his family to go out in search of a stream, to be immersed in. Is it likely that they did this? 2d. According to the Roman law, the jailer would have forfeited his life by taking the prisoners out of the prison. Hence, when he supposed the prisoners gone, he drew his sword, and was about to commit suicide. Paul, who was acquainted with the Roman law, seeing the drawn sword, understood the design, and exclaimed, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!" Would the jailer, acting under such authority, and subject to such a penalty, have taken the prisoners out? By so doing, would he not have violated both the Roman law, and the principles of the gospel? What saith this same apostle, in reference to such cases? "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation."—Rom. xiii. 1, 2.

3. If Paul and Silas had gone out with the jailer, would they not have been *accomplices* in his breach of trust and disregard of law? Were they morally capable of such conduct? If not, did they do it!

4. The next morning, when they had permission to leave the prison, they positively refused to come out, till the magistrates should come

and take them out publicly. Would these apostles of our Divine Lord go out of the prison in the darkness of the night, without permission, and thus become accomplices with the jailer in the infraction of both law and gospel ; and then in the light of day refuse to go out, until the constituted authorities had taken them out ? If not, then the jailer and his family were baptized within the walls of the prison. If so, how were they baptized ? Is it likely that there was a baptistery in a pagan jail ! If not, were they immersed ? Is it not more likely that they were baptized, as Paul himself was, in the house of Judas of Damascus, as the company in the house of Cornelius were, and as the three thousand were on the day of Pentecost ?

THE DIVINE ECONOMY TOWARDS THE HUMAN  
FAMILY.

## ESSAY XIII.

THE foundation of all good government is laid in the family organization. This is the wise arrangement of our benevolent Creator. It is one of the laws of happy Eden, and is coeval with our race. It lies at the foundation of social bliss, and is indispensable to purity of character. Concubinage and polygamy are at war with this fundamental law of our wise and benevolent Creator; and they are uniformly attended with incalculable mischief. Hence, the forcible, pertinent, and inspired remarks of the prophet Malachi:—"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously; yet she is thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make *one*? Yet had he the *residue* of the spirit. And *wherefore one*? That he might seek a *godly seed*."—

Mal. ii. 10, 14, 15. The marriage covenant is next in importance to the covenant of grace;—and out of respect to that covenant, God himself claims to be the husband of the Church.—There is no earthly relationship so sacred as that between parents and children. God has, for the wisest and best of purposes, implanted in the bosom of parents a peculiar affection for their children. A parent without this affection, is justly regarded as a monster, rather than a human being. The veneration and attachment of children for their parents is also peculiar. A mother's love is proverbial; and it is the brightest image of the love of God. Hence the following pertinent interrogatory, and gracious assurance—“*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?—Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.*” Isa. xlix. 15. The whole force and pertinency of this appeal arises out of the intensity and perpetuity of a mother's love. The prayer of Abraham for Ishmael is the natural effusion of parental affection.—And Abraham said unto God: O that Ishmael might live before thee!” Gen. xvii. 18.

Now it is worthy of grateful consideration, that the *divine economy* towards the human family is adapted to this natural affection. God uniformly includes the children with their parents in every covenant he makes with the human family.

1st. It was so in regard to the covenant he made with our first parents before their apostasy,



while Eden's uncursed bowers were strangers alike to sin and sorrow. If the children had not been included with their parents, how could the fall of the parents have involved the whole family in the same state of pollution and misery? It is immaterial whether this Adamic arrangement be called a covenant or a constitution:—the principle is the same, and the consequences are the same. The universality of the consequence proves that the whole family were included. The words of the apostle are truly plain, expressive, and conclusive—"Whereas by *one man* sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon *all men*, for that all have sinned: Therefore as by the offence of *one* judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by *one man's disobedience many were made sinners*, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. Who, in the face of this plain and expressive language, can dispute the fact, that the whole human family were included with the first parents of the race in this divine arrangement? If all had not been regarded as fallen, a Saviour would not have been provided for all.

2d. The same principle was regarded in the covenant made with Noah after the flood:—"And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. —And God said, This is the token of the cove-

nant, which I make between me and you:—I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. Gen. ix. 8, 9, 12, 13. Had Noah's posterity not been included in the covenant, the bow in the cloud would now have been inexpressive and useless—as to the manifestation of the divine intentions towards the family of man. But having been included, that splendid bow is not only an exhibition of the infinite skill of the omniscient Jehovah, but also an emblem of his kind designs towards our race.

3d. The same principle was observed in the covenant made with the children of Israel in the plains of Moab. Deut. xxix. 10–13. “Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your *little ones*, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water; that *thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God*, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day: that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and *that he may be unto thee a God*, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.” This language here is too plain to justify comment, and fully establishes the principle under consideration.

4th. The same is true of the covenant made with Abraham. This was not, as has been supposed, a mere national covenant, securing tempo-

ral blessings. God could neither promise nor bestow more than is comprehended in this covenant. Look at the language of the covenant, and reflect on the depth and comprehension of its promised blessings. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and *thy seed* after thee in *their generations*, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God to thee, and to *thy seed* after thee." Gen. xvii. 7. This is most assuredly that gracious and well ordered covenant that secures salvation. Is it not certain that the apostle Paul so understood it? Gal. iii. 13, 14. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the *blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ*, that we might receive the *promise of the spirit through faith*." Again, Gal. iii. 17, 18. "And this I say, that the *covenant* that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Now, let us inquire, what is the blessing of Abraham?—Surely all will grant that it is some blessing that God promised to Abraham.

But *what* is that blessing, and *where* is the promise contained? The true answer to this is as plain as the light of the sun. It is in the covenant, made four hundred and thirty years before the giving of the Sinaitic law. Well, what is

the nature and degree of that blessing? "To be a God to thee, and thy seed after thee." The promise of the earthly Canaan is merely an appendage to this covenant. It is merely a *temporal blessing*, that comes on the "Gentiles through *Jesus Christ!*" Is the receipt of the *promised Spirit, by faith*, merely a *badge of national distinction*? Is it merely temporal good that is secured by that covenant, which is "*confirmed of God in Christ?*" Can the covenant of grace be established on better principles, or secure higher results? But, that the blessings promised in this covenant are spiritual and eternal, is still further evident, from the concluding verses of this chapter:—"For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." *What promise?* Surely the promise made in the covenant. Then it is manifest that the blessings promised in the Abrahamic covenant are spiritual and saving. If so, it is the covenant of grace. This covenant has been ignorantly, or perversely, confounded with the covenant made at Sinai four hundred and thirty years after, of which the apostle Paul speaks in Heb. viii. 7-10

This Abrahamic covenant is alluded to by the apostle Peter, in his address on the day of Pen-

tecost. "For the *promise* is to *you* and *your children*." Some refer this to Joel ii. 28; but with manifest impropriety, as appears, 1st, From the fact, that Joel ii. 28 contains a *prophecy*—not a *promise*; 2d. From the fact, that there was no sealing ordinance connected with the *prophecy* in Joel; but there was with the *promise* in the Abrahamic covenant; and this seal had the same spiritual import with the seal appointed under the gospel dispensation. The seal of the covenant may be changed, and the covenant itself remain the same. The two ordinances under the Old Testament, were circumcision and the pass-over—the two under the New Testament, are baptism and the Lord's supper. We know that the Lord's supper has taken the place of the pass-over, for Christ is called "our passover." What has taken the place of circumcision? Nothing, unless it be baptism. It has been alleged, that circumcision was intended merely as a badge of national distinction, and had no spiritual meaning. But this is manifestly unscriptural. Attention to a few passages will be sufficient to convince any one of this fact. "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x. 16. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx. 9. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem." Jer. iv. 4. "Ye stiff-necked, and



uncircumcised in heart and ear, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." Acts vii. 51. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Rom. ii. 28, 29. In view of these texts, I would ask any one—Are not baptism and circumcision symbols alike of the same glorious work of the Holy Spirit?

THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT SHOULD BE APPLIED TO THE CHILDREN, AS WELL AS TO THEIR PARENTS.

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ESSAY XIV.

IN the preceding essay, I attempted to prove that it is an established principle in the Divine economy towards our race, to include the children with their parents in every covenant, that God is pleased to make with the parents. This principle was observed in the Adamic, the Noachic, and the Abrahamic covenants, as well as in the covenant made with the family of Israel, just before the death of Moses. These cases are so plain and pertinent, that no sane person is likely to dispute the correctness of the principle. But if the children are included with their parents in the several covenants, then, whenever there is a seal attached to the covenant, there is the same propriety in applying the seal to the children that there is in applying it to the parents. What is the use of a seal, but to bring the covenant to view, and to denote the covenant engagement? Why apply the seal to the parents? Certainly to denote the fact, that they are in the

covenant. But are the children included with their parents in the covenant? Then, certainly, there is an obvious propriety in applying the seal to the children, as well as to their parents. Why apply it to the one, and withhold it from the other, when they are all alike included?

But do you ask for a "Thus saith the Lord?" It is furnished: God directed Abraham to apply the seal of the covenant to his male offspring—the female, under the Old Testament dispensation, being represented by, and included in, the male. It is manifest, that God required the seal of the covenant to be applied to the children, as well as the parents, under the Old Testament dispensation, both in the case of a native Jew, and of a Gentile proselyte. The same law must obtain under the New Testament dispensation, if it has not been expressly repealed. A law, once enacted, is always binding, till it is repealed. But has this law of heaven been repealed? Is not the God of the New Testament, and of the Old, the same infinitely wise and benevolent Being? Is not parental affection the same under the gospel, as under the law? Does the refining influence of the gospel tend to extinguish natural affection? Is the relationship between parent and child less endearing, under the full orb'd revelation of Jesus Christ, and the plentiful effusions of the Holy Spirit, than under the dimmer lights of the types and shadows of the preceding dispensation? Or is the ever-blessed God and Redeemer less inclined now, than formerly, to gratify parental desires and anxieties? But what

is the use of multiplying interrogatories? If this law of heaven is repealed, there must be a record of the repealing act. But where is that record? If there be such an act, and such a record, it must mark the *transition* from the Old to the New Testament dispensation. But is this transition distinguished by such a record? Does the commission of Jesus Christ to his apostles furnish it? "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."—Mark xvi. 15, 16. Does this exclude infants from baptism, and from the covenant, of which it is the seal? If so, it necessarily excludes them from salvation! Must infants be debarred from baptism, because they are incapable of believing? The same incapacity must then debar them from salvation—for, "he that believeth not, shall be damned!" No man, nor angel, can apply this commission of the adorable Author of our holy religion to infants, so as to exclude them from baptism, without, at the same time, excluding them from salvation! But who is prepared to meet a consequence so repugnant to parental kindness, and so unlike the character of the benevolent Author of our salvation? What! would you rather seize the two-edged sword of the gospel, and turn it with a tremendously destructive power against the infant offspring of believing parents, than admit them to that position, that was expressly assigned them by God himself, in the Abrahamic covenant?! One thing is cer-

tain; the apostolic commission cannot be applied to infants, without sweeping them to merciless perdition!

The same remarks may be made in reference to the address of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins."—Acts ii. 38. Must infants be debarred from baptism, because they cannot repent? Then they must perish! for "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." The language of Peter is remarkable. The literal rendering of the Greek is, "Repent ye, and let every one of you be baptized." Why this change of the number and person of the verb, if the apostle did not intend to include more in the case of baptism, than in that of repentance? If none but adults were to be baptized, the reason urged by the apostle would also be strange, and preposterous, "*For the promise is to you, and to your children.*" None but penitent adults must be baptized, "*for the promise is to them, and to their children!*" The promise is to the children, as well as to their parents; THEREFORE, *the children must not be baptized!* The children are included in the covenant, as well as their parents; THEREFORE the *seal* of the covenant must be applied to the parents *alone!* According to this exposition, the apostle Peter must have been a profound logician indeed!

One thing is certain, the command to repent and believe cannot apply to infants, (if for no other reason,) because the Author of revelation



is the God of *reason*, as well as *benevolence*. But if this command cannot apply to infants, it cannot, of course, exclude them from baptism. The church membership of infants, therefore, is not repealed, either by the apostolic commission, or by the address of Peter on the day of Pentecost. Where, then, is the record of the repealing act? and when was the repealing act performed?

But it has been proved, that it is an essential part of the divine economy towards the human family, to include the children with their parents in every covenant. But this *supposed repeal* would be a fundamental violation of that principle. Now, if this essential feature of the covenant, involving the law of infant church membership, is not abrogated, then the seal of the covenant ought still to be applied to the infant offspring of believers. But the seal under the gospel is baptism. Manifestly, therefore, and indisputably, the children of believing parents ought to be baptized. Does the objector say, that infants cannot understand the design of baptism, and ought not, therefore, to be baptized? It is enough to say in reply, that it is as easy to understand the design of baptism, as that of circumcision, for they are both of the same spiritual import; and yet God, the God of wisdom and benevolence, required the infant offspring of his people to be circumcised. Is not God wiser than man? But does the objector again ask, What good can arise from the baptism of an infant? The same question would apply with the same force to circumcision, and

yet God required it. Sometimes terms of indignity and of contempt are used, to designate infant baptism. Perhaps the enemies of circumcision made use of the same terms. It is very evident, that the same terms will apply equally well to both cases. But God is abundantly able to vindicate his own appointments from all these aspersions, and we may safely commit that matter to his hands. The features of the covenant of grace are a correct index of the state of his own divinely wise and compassionate heart, and of the character of his own moral affections. God claims to be a Father, intelligent and kind; and he knows how to address and adapt himself to the purest and most intense feelings of the parental bosom. Would the exclusion of the offspring of his people be an expression of intelligent goodness! Would it be a gratification of parental tenderness and anxiety! When parents feel the most ardent glow of sacred love, and when they are the most deeply penetrated with the spirit of self-consecration, do they feel the *least desire* that their children also should be the Lord's!

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ONE UNDER BOTH  
DISPENSATIONS.

## ESSAY XV.

HAVING established the interesting and glorious fact, that children are included with their parents in every covenant ; that this is especially true in regard to the Abrahamic covenant, which is really the covenant of grace, and obtains with all the plenitude of its wise and gracious provisions under the gospel ; and, consequently, that baptism, which is the seal of this covenant under the gospel, ought to be administered to the infant offspring of God's people, as circumcision formerly was ; I now proceed to establish the same truth from the ONENESS of the church, under both the Old and the New Testament dispensations.

That God had what may, with the utmost propriety, be called a church, under the Old Testament dispensation, no person of common reading and reflection will pretend to dispute. He claimed to be the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He chose the people of Israel

for his peculiar people. He raised up prophets and instructors, and established religious ordinances among them. He entered into solemn covenant with them, and annexed a seal for their observance, which was indicative of purity of heart and life. But there is no necessity for a train of argumentation to prove that God had a church under the Old Testament. The devout and inspired Stephen makes mention of this church, in his solemn address just before his martyrdom: "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he that was in the CHURCH in the wilderness with the angel, which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto you.'"—Acts vii. 37, 38.

That the church is one and the same, under both dispensations, is abundantly evident, from the following considerations:

1. God, the ever blessed God claims to be the husband of the church. But if the church be his wife or spouse, it must continue the same. Now, in order to the *sameness* of the church, it is not necessary that it be established, and continued with one particular nation or people. It may be organized in one family; it may afterwards embrace a nation; it may finally embrace every nation. But the church itself, all the while, may remain one and the same. The external and visible rites of the church may also be

changed, and still the church itself may remain one and the same; just as a covenant, in its principles and provisions, may be immutable and everlasting; and yet the sign and seal of that covenant may be changed. These are plain and common sense remarks, that will readily commend themselves to the judgment of every sober reflecting man.

But did God expressly claim to be the *Husband* of the church, under the Old Testament? Most unquestionably. "Thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called."—Isa. liv. 5. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, (which my covenant they break, although I was an *Husband* unto them, saith the Lord.)"—Jer. xxxi. 31, 32. This is amply sufficient, to establish the fact of God's being the Husband of the church, under the Old Testament dispensation. But does the same relationship obtain under the New? "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concern-



ing Christ and the church.—Eph. v. 23–32. “I am jealous over you, with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ.”—2 Cor. xi. 2.

On comparing the New Testament with the Old, we clearly see, not only that the Christ of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old; but we also see that the church of both Testaments is the wife of the one unchangeable Jehovah; and, consequently, that this church must be one and the same under both dispensations. Who, that has read the word of God with any degree of attention, is not aware that the terms *idolatry* and *adultery* are often, very often, used synonymously? But what is *idolatry*? and why is it called *adultery*, when practised by the church? Certainly because God claims to be the Husband of the church. Now, if the same unchangeable God is the husband of the church, under both dispensations, will it not fairly follow, that the church of the New Testament, and that of the Old, must be one and the same?

2. The ONENESS of the church may be proved clearly and conclusively, from the words of our Saviour himself. “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”—Matt. xxi. 43. These words were addressed to the Jews, and the nation referred to must be the Gentiles. But what are we to understand by “the kingdom of God?” It does not mean heaven surely. Nor can it mean the gospel dispensation, for that was

then only about to be introduced. None will contend, that it means the kingdom of grace, which is established in the soul, and is "righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost," for this is that "good part, that shall not be taken away" from its possessor. Nor can it mean God's dominion over universal nature. What, then, can it mean, but the *visible church*, with its attendant blessings and privileges? Was this church *changed* at the introduction of the gospel dispensation? Or was it only *transferred* from one people to another? What is the obvious meaning of the Saviour's language? Can the intelligent reader hesitate for a moment? Well, if there is merely a *transfer* of the church from one nation to another, of course the church itself must remain the same.

3. The ONENESS of the church may be fairly deduced from the language of the apostle Paul to the Ephesian Christians. Let the reader carefully consult Eph. ii. 11-22. It is too long for transcription in this brief essay. However, I must transcribe a part: "For through him we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access by one spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built on the *foundation* of the *apostles and prophets*, *Jesus Christ himself* being the *chief corner stone*; in whom all the *building fitly framed together*, groweth unto a *holy temple* in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

Can language be more pertinent and more pointed? This address is made to converted Gentiles. They are hereby assured, that though formerly they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, they were now fellow participants of the same covenants of promise. The middle wall of partition being broken down, both Jews and Gentiles were become one body. But some may contend, that this was effected by the extinction of the old body, and by the formation of a new body. By no means. There was a change only in the external symbols, which are always shadowy; every thing essential to the body remaining the same. The change was effected, not by the two nations meeting on half-way or common ground, but the "foreigners and strangers were brought nigh by the blood of Christ." All this is expressed in the fact, there is but *one foundation* for the Old and New Testament church to rest upon, "built on the *foundation* of the *apostles* and *prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." As there is but one foundation, of course there can be but one building. "In whom *all the building*, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy *temple* in the Lord; in whom ye are also builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." What a glorious train of thought is here presented! Here is a foundation, extending backward to the fall, and forward to the end of time. Here are indissoluble chains, connecting the Old and New Testament Scriptures. "The apostles and the prophets" form a common founda-

tion. All true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, are built on this foundation. Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner stone of both the foundation and the superstructure. This one building, this holy temple, is throughout "fitly framed together." Of course, it must be substantially and essentially alike in all its parts. Of course, the part of the building on the foundation of the apostles, must be essentially the same with the part on the foundation of the prophets. Then, let me here pause and ask, what constituted the church, as it stood on the foundation of the prophets? Certainly, and indisputably, believers and their offspring. Then, certainly, and indisputably, believers and their offspring must form the part of the building which stands on the foundation of the apostles. How, on any other plan, could the whole building be regarded as *one*? Or how else could it be *fitly framed together*? What! the whole building *ONE*, and *fitly framed together*, too; and yet in one part of the building we see parents and children standing together, and in the other part of the same building we see parents standing alone, and their children excluded! Is this possible? What, then, is impossible!

4. The *ONENESS* of the church may be fairly inferred from the silence of the Jews in reference to church constituency at the introduction of the gospel. The Jews had been accustomed to the membership of the children of believers from the days of Abraham. And is there a sudden, and an unpredicted dismemberment? and

yet no expression of astonishment; not one word of complaint from the lips of that people, who felt a most sacred veneration for their ancient usages; and who were proverbial for their complaints! Is it not astonishing, that neither friend, nor foe, believer nor unbeliever among the Jews is found, either to express surprise, or to make complaint at this new arrangement! See with what untiring tenacity they held to circumcision! How many of the professed disciples even held to the necessity of circumcision in order to salvation! And what is circumcision but a mere emblem or shadow? But infant church membership was a precious provision of the everlasting covenant, and lay at the very foundation of the church. And, at the opening of the new dispensation, is the everlasting covenant despoiled of this provision, and is there a change effected in the very constituency of the church; a change the most repugnant, too, to the warmest and purest affections of the parental bosom? and yet is there not one murmuring word, not even one expression of grief?! How comes it, that the fault-finding, clamorous Jews are now as silent as the grave, when they might have had an exceedingly plausible reason for complaint! But had they raised a clamour on this ground, would not faithful history have recorded it? In the absence of such a record, are we not compelled to believe that such objection was not raised? And if such objection was not made, must it not have been, because there was no foundation for raising it? And how



could there have been a foundation for raising this objection, if the church under both dispensations is essentially one, and its constituency of course the same? But there is another argument, that I must reserve for a future essay.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST ONE UNDER BOTH  
DISPENSATIONS.

## ESSAY XVI.

IN the preceding essay I attempted to prove the ONENESS of the Church.—1. From the fact, that Jehovah Jesus is the Husband of the Church, under both the Old and the New Testament dispensation. 2. From the declaration of Christ—“The kingdom of God shall be *taken from you and given to a nation*, bringing forth the fruits thereof.” 3. From the declaration of the apostle Paul, that both Jewish and Gentile believers—believers under both dispensations, are built on a common foundation—“the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; that the building—the temple of God, is one, and that it is *fitly framed together*.” 4. From the fact, that the complaining Jews tabled no complaint against Christ and his apostles for having changed the divinely appointed usage, that had obtained from the days of Abraham, by excluding the infant offspring of believers from the visible Church :

whereas, if the change had been made, the complaint would certainly have been tabled.

I now proceed to a *fifth* argument, drawn from what the apostle Paul says about the good olive tree and its branches. Rom. xi. 11, 12, 15–21, 21, 23, 24. A part only of this interesting portion of scripture can I at present transcribe.—“If some of the branches be *broken off*, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert *grafted in among them*, and *with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree*; boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou *bearest not the root*, but the *root thee*. Thou wilt say then, the branches *were broken off*, that I might *be grafted in*. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and *wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree*; how much more shall those, which be the *natural branches*, be *grafted into their own olive tree*?”

Now, what is the good olive tree, but the visible Church? The Jews were by profession the people of God; and, the visible Church, being first established among them, they are called the *natural branches* of this good olive tree. By the rejection of the Messiah, the body of that nation ceased to be God’s visible Church and people. It was thus, that the natural branches were broken off. Those of them, that embraced the Messiah, maintained their former standing as branches of

the good olive tree. The converts from among the Gentiles were grafted in the same good olive tree, in the place of the natural branches, that were broken off, and in the midst of the branches that remained.—Consequently there was but one good olive tree—one visible Church. Into that very tree, from which the Jews, as the natural branches were broken off, the Gentile converts were grafted. Here, now, is the transition state between the Old, and the New Testament dispensations. If the New Testament Church is not to be fundamentally and essentially the same with the Old Testament Church, now is the time for the change to ensue. But what change is effected at this interesting period of the Church's history? None—positively none, except the removing of some branches, and the inserting of others. The *tree* remains the same. The same Church appears under the effulgence of the gospel, as under the dimmer lights of the preceding dispensation. Manifestly, therefore, the Gentile converts are not organized into a new church, any more than the believing Jews. The Jewish disciples occupy their former ground; and the Gentile converts are added to them. The natural branches, which remain, stand in the “good olive tree,” *where* they had formerly stood. Of course they must stand, *as* they formerly stood. How can they stand *where* they stood, unless they stand *as* they stood? But *how* did they formerly stand? Most indisputably, parents and children stood together. How were the natural branches broken off? Certainly, as

they stood. If they stood parents and children together, in like manner must they have been broken off.—If the children were included with their parents in their standing, so also must they have been in their fall. But if the Jews were broken off as they stood—parents and children together;—how were the Gentiles admitted to their place, unless it were parents and children together? Had the children of the Gentile converts been excluded, what an incongruous spectacle would have been presented! Jewish Christians and their offspring standing together;—and, on the same platform, Gentile Christians standing alone! Would all the building in this case be fitly framed together? Is this the kind of temple, that God is rearing for his own inhabitation? “Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also.” He is “no respecter of persons.” He makes no discriminations among his own people; especially such as strike at the very foundation of the family organization!

But the natural branches are to be grafted in again. The Jews are to be converted, and again to form a part of the visible Church. When they shall have been converted, what will become of their children? This question is answered by the prophet Jeremiah. Speaking of the restoration of their captivity, and of their conversion to the Lord, he says, “Their *children* shall be *as aforetime*.”—Jer. xxx. 20. This language is plain, and can have but one meaning. Their children were formerly included in the



covenant, had the seal of the covenant applied to them, and stood with their parents in the visible Church.

Can further proof be necessary to show incontestably, that the Church of Christ is substantially, and essentially the same under both the Old and the New Testament dispensations? But can the Church be the same, and its constituent membership different! Were the offspring of believers formerly included with their parents; and are they now to be excluded? and, being excluded, is the Church still the same? How manifestly absurd and ridiculous is such a sentiment? But if children are included with their believing parents under the gospel, as they were under the preceding dispensation; then certainly, they ought now to be baptized, as they were formerly circumcised. No one can admit, that they are included with their parents, and with them belong to the visible Church, without admitting, at the same time, the propriety of their baptism. Circumcision was formerly the badge of discipleship, and of church membership, just as baptism now is. There is, therefore, the same propriety in baptizing the offspring of believers now, that there formerly was in circumcising them.

CHILDREN OF BELIEVERS OUGHT TO BE  
BAPTIZED.

## ESSAY XVII.

HAVING proved that it is a fundamental and prominent feature in the Divine economy towards the human family, to include the children with their parents, in every covenant; in the covenant of grace itself, as well as in covenants containing provisions of temporal favor: having also proved that the church of Christ is emphatically ONE, under both dispensations, having the same Mediator; the same enlightening and purifying Spirit; the same glorious Head and Husband; and the same foundation; so that it may be truly and fitly called one building—one temple—one good olive tree—and one kingdom: the propriety of the baptism of the infant offspring of believers, follows as fairly and as naturally, as a stream flows from a full and unobstructed fountain, or as beams of light flow from an unclouded sun. Are they truly in the covenant with their parents? Then why withhold from them the seal of the covenant? especially seeing God himself once commanded the seal to be applied to

them, and has never revoked that command? But the seal under the gospel is baptism. Why, then, should they not be baptized? The same inference unavoidably follows from the ONENESS of the church under both dispensations. That the infant offspring of believers were formerly members of the visible church, and that they were admitted, or their membership designated by circumcision, no sane person, who has paid common attention to the word of God, will for a moment dispute. Then, certainly, if the church is one and the same, they are members of the visible church under the gospel, and baptism, which is now the initiatory rite, the badge of discipleship, ought to be administered to them. By what authority can it be withheld? Who "can forbid water, that they should not be baptized," who are members, as well as their parents? How plain—how legitimate—how forcible is this testimony! Yet there are other considerations, tending directly to establish the same point.

1. The notice that our blessed Saviour took of little children, if not directly, at least indirectly and very forcibly proves the same doctrine. "Suffer *the little children* to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."—Mark x. 14. Matthew and Mark say, that "little children" were brought to the Saviour. Luke says, that they were "infants." The term used by Matthew and Mark, denotes young children, but may be applied to persons of more mature age. The term used by Luke

means infants, and *infants only*. This determines the meaning of the term that is used by Matthew and Mark. The language of Jesus is very emphatic. "Suffer *the little children*," (ta paidia.) These are the words that are recorded by all the evangelists. The article in Greek has the force of a demonstrative adjective pronoun. "The little children," is an expression that is very *designative*. The expression, "of such," is in perfect accordance. What does this expression mean in this place? Does it mean little children generally and indiscriminately? "Such" is an adjective, and refers to some noun understood. What noun is referred to? Manifestly "children." Then read it with the ellipsis supplied, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of *such little children* is the kingdom of God." But what kind of little children were they? Certainly, such as were then brought to the Saviour. But what was peculiar in their case? Their parents were believers in Christ, or they would not have sought his blessing on their children. What else can this very descriptive language mean? But, if this be the meaning, then the infant offspring of believing parents belong to "the kingdom of God." But what is meant by "the kingdom of God?" All will grant, that this expression must, in this connexion, mean either the visible church, or the invisible church, or the church triumphant. If the expression means the *church triumphant*, then the infant offspring of believers belong to that highly favoured community, and

are certainly entitled to a place in the church militant. If they are the destined heirs of glory, it is suitable and becoming, most unquestionably, that they should be in the nursery of grace on earth, in the place of training for a transplantation to the soil of heaven. But if the expression, "kingdom of God," mean the *invisible church*, the point in debate is at once settled, for the invisible church is composed of true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and all Christian denominations are in favour of the baptism and church membership of believers. But if the expression, "kingdom of God," is not intended by the Saviour to denote either the church triumphant, or the invisible church, then it fairly follows, that it must mean the *visible church*. But if the offspring of believers belong to the visible church, of course they ought to be baptized, for baptism is the appointed badge of discipleship, and of membership.

2. The same gospel truth may be argued from the asseveration of the apostle Paul. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."—1 Cor. vii. 14. What is the meaning of this language? Surely it cannot mean, that grace is in the blood; that it naturally descends from parent to child; and, consequently, that, if but one of the parents be pious and regenerate, the offspring will by birth be participant of the same grace and moral character. Doubtless, holiness is not transmitted by natural



generation. The children of believing parents are fallen, as well as others, and as much need renewing grace, as other children. It is by the second birth, the birth from heaven, that any of our family become the children of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to *become the sons of God*, even to as many as believe on his name, which *were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*"—John i. 12, 13. It therefore follows, that the apostle, in this text, is not speaking of personal holiness, of purity of heart; for this is an attribute, not incident to man in his natural estate; but in every case where it obtains, it is the product of special grace; the blessed fruit of the Holy Spirit.

What, then, can be the apostle's meaning? Some have alleged, that the apostle is alluding to the *legitimacy* or *illegitimacy* of natural birth! "Else were your children *illegitimate*, but now are they *legitimate*!'" This is absolutely too absurd and ridiculous to bear a moment's inspection. The mere statement is sufficient for its refutation. The idea of children begotten in lawful wedlock being *illegitimate*, is surely not *celestial* nor is it *terrestrial*! What then? Let me, therefore, again ask, what does this intelligent and divinely inspired apostle mean? When we carefully look at the Abrahamic covenant, and consider its provisions and its privileges, we may see a propriety; a beauty; a divine symmetry, in this apostolic asseveration. The covenant is entered by *faith*. In the covenant are two classes of

provisions, one for the believer, the other for his offspring: "To be a God to *thee* and to *thy seed* after thee." The apostle's design was, not so much to teach the fact, that children were included with their parents in the covenant; for this had been abundantly taught before. But in the case under consideration, there was a difficulty. One of the parents is a believer, the other is an unbeliever. Now, shall the faith of the one include the children in the covenant? Or shall the unbelief of the other, exclude them from it? This is a question which the unerring Spirit of inspiration alone was competent to answer; and in this text we have the answer. This answer is also in perfect accordance with God's character, for he delights in mercy, and judgment is his strange work. While he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him; he extends mercy to thousands of generations of them that love him and keep his commandments. Using the Abrahamic covenant as a key, the mysteries of this text are easily unlocked and explored. The *faith* of *one* of the parents brings the children within the environs of a holy covenant, and into a peculiar relationship to a holy God, and renders them the fit subjects of a holy ordinance. They are therefore called "holy," because of this relationship, just as every thing else that is consecrated to God, is, by the very act of consecration, called "holy." It was thus with "the book, and the tabernacle, and the people, and all the vessels of the minis-

try," under the Mosaic law. But where both the parents are unbelievers, the covenant is not entered, and this relationship to God and his ordinances does not obtain. In that case the children are said to be "unclean." Both the *uncleanness* and the *holiness* are *relative* and *federal*. In the one case there is *consecration* to a *holy use*; in the other there is not.

What a beautiful illustration and enforcement does the apostle in this text afford, of the great and gracious principles under consideration! How strikingly is the covenant of grace, with its rich provisions, brought to view! and how irresistible is the proof, that the seal of the covenant ought to be applied to the children, even when only one of the parents is a believer! How well, too, did the practice of this apostle accord with his creed? In the brief history that is given of the career of this apostle, we have notice of three cases of household baptisms. The notice is brief, but expressive.

1. The first notice we have, is that of Lydia: "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and *her household*, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged *me* to be *faithful* to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."—Acts xvi. 14, 15. There has been much conjecturing about the members of Lydia's household. All such conjectures are gratuitous and useless.

There is one fact of great importance taught us in this brief history. The character of Lydia alone is described. The Lord *opened her heart*. She was *faithful* to the Lord, and she was baptized, and her household. The fact that *her character* is described, and that nothing is said about the character of her *household*; and that her baptism, and that of her household, are directly consequent on this description of her character, is conclusive proof that *her faith* was the ground, not of her baptism only, but also of that of her household. It is perfectly immaterial what changes took place afterwards; whether the brethren, mentioned in the last verse of this chapter, were members of her household; or what is far more probable, other disciples, who were at the time partaking of her hospitality.

2. The baptism of the jailer and his family is also directly in point. He tremblingly inquires, "What must I do to be saved?" The apostle's answer, "*Believe* in the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*" Why do they speak of the salvation of his house, as well as of his own salvation, as the result of his faith? Is not the covenant of grace, with its ample provisions, here brought to view? His faith would include his children in the covenant. This satisfactorily explains their *otherwise* strange answer. The jailer having believed, what was the immediate consequence? He was baptized, *he and all his*, straightway? Did they all believe? If so, why are none named but the jailer? Was not the faith of each one of the family as

important as his? Is it not manifest from the history, that the baptism of both the jailer and his family, was consequent on the faith of the jailer alone? Where is the proof that any of his family believed in Jesus Christ? He "rejoices, believing in God with all his house." The Greek word denoting his faith, is a perfect participle of the masculine gender, and is expressive of the faith of the jailer alone, "He having believed." The word translated, "with all his house," is an adverb, and may perhaps with more propriety be connected with "rejoiced," than with "believing." The following appears to be the most natural rendering: "Having believed in God, he rejoiced with all his house." This may mean, that his family participated in his joy. Or it may mean, that having given himself and his family to the Lord, by the exercise of a living faith, he rejoiced *over all his family*, as their head and representative. Or it may mean, that he rejoiced *through all his house*. If you connect "believing" with "all his house," so as to make them participants in his faith, you thereby exclude them from his joy. It would then read, "Having believed in God with all his house, *he rejoiced*." Did they then participate in his *faith*, but not in his *joy*? Is it not more likely that they participated in his joy, and not in his faith? The subsidence of their great alarm would naturally inspire them joy, even in the absence of faith. But whether they believed or not, their baptism was connected with *his faith*, as is evident from their being mentioned *collectively*, as *his family*, and



not *individually*, as having embraced the Saviour by faith, each for himself. How much like the case of Abraham, is that of the jailer and of Lydia! He believed, and was circumcised, he and all his.

3. The other case of household baptism is that of Stephanas. 1 Cor. i. 16. It is not by *households*, that men believe in Jesus Christ, but as *individuals*. Therefore, when mention is made of the baptism of a *household*, without naming any individual members, the presumption always must be, that it was not in pursuance of the *faith* of the *household*, that the ordinance was administered, but on some other ground. When we consider the principles established in the preceding essays, the provisions of the covenant, and the oneness of the church throughout all the ages of time, the whole matter is plain, and the conduct of the apostle intelligible and consistent.

## THE PROPER DEDICATION AND TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

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### ESSAY XVIII.

FAITH is necessary to the acceptable and profitable performance of any duty. A physical action may be blindly or inadvertently performed; and yet the result may be as beneficial, as if intelligence and benevolence had presided at the helm. But it is different in moral actions. Here there must be discernment and integrity. The truth must be seen and embraced. God is a being of infinite intelligence, and of infinite moral rectitude. His mind perceives what is true in principle, and right in action; and the desires and purposes of his heart are always in perfect unison with the perceptions of his mind. As far as this is the case with man, he resembles God, and may rightfully and joyfully call him Father.

These remarks will apply to the dedication and training of children, as well as to the performance of any other duty. God includes the children with their parents in the covenant of grace. This covenant is entered by faith. Where there is no true and saving faith, the covenant

does not obtain; and, consequently, the seal is not properly used. There may be the form; but there is not the fact. There may be the sign: but there is not the substance. The principles and provisions of the covenant must be apprehended by the mind, and embraced with the heart. There are two classes of provisions in the covenant; and each class is apprehended by faith.

Abraham received circumcision, as the sign and seal of his faith.—Rom. iv. 11. This faith led to the dedication of himself to God. It also led to the dedication of his children. These were separate and distinct acts of the same faith. The first parental duty is the believing dedication of the child to God. The use of the sign and seal of the covenant gives *visibility* to this act of dedication. It is a transaction between God and the believing parent.—The act is solemn, and interesting. The regeneration and salvation of the child is the high and momentous object in contemplation. The parent, having given himself to the Lord, and chosen Christ as his Saviour, desires, that his child may be a fellow participant in the same eternal blessedness. This natural affection was planted in the parental bosom by the hand of the Creator, and has now been sanctified by the Holy Spirit. But God has an end in view, worthy of himself, in all the operations of his hand, and arrangements of his counsel. He has arranged and adapted the provisions of the covenant of grace, so as to accord with the kindest

emotions of the parental bosom, when sanctified by the Spirit of grace. In this very arrangement we have the most delightful and convincing proof, that the God of *nature* is the God of *providence* and of *grace*!

What could be more natural than the prayer of Abraham—"O that Ishmael might live before thee!" Enjoying the smile of God in his own soul, and entertaining the sweet hope of eternal life beyond the grave;—what could be more accordant and appropriate, than for him to desire the same imperishable favors for his son! And what an evidence of the divine benignity is furnished in the everlasting covenant, in suiting its provisions to this very exigency!

But all God's arrangements are intended to develope, and strengthen, and mature the affections and desires, that constitute good moral character. His counsels, his plans, and his influences are not intended to supersede man's moral agency; but, on the contrary, to excite him to correct and vigorous moral action. Hence, the necessity on the part of the parent of an honest, cordial, believing dedication of his offspring to God. Realizing that they with himself are fallen, and that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, and the Holy Spirit the only sanctifier; he must in the exercise of faith give them up to God, to be redeemed by Jesus Christ, and renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Thus he gave himself up to God, and solemnly purposed, relying on the aids of the Holy Spirit, to live in submission to the authority of God, and in the active

discharge of Christian duty. So, in giving up his children, it must be his solemn purpose to regard them as the Lord's, and to train them for the Lord. Though the promise of the covenant is—"To be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee;" yet in neither case is this promise unconditional. Should the believer, after having given himself to the Lord, turn away from the path of holiness, he would fail of salvation. So with the believing parent. It is not enough to have dedicated a child to God. There must be an after training for the Lord. This great practical truth is clearly implied in what the Lord said respecting Abraham—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him: and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham, that which he hath spoken of him." The correct and religious training of children implies three things especially:—

1st. A godly example. Without this the most prudent counsel, the most affecting appeals, and the most urgent entreaties, will be comparatively unavailing. A godly life is a silent, but a powerful monitor. The most salutary impressions are often made, when there is not even a word of advice, or of admonition directly given. The pious deportment of Abraham is implied in the expression—"He will command his children and his household *after him*." This he could not do without walking himself in the prescribed path. Nothing should characterize a professing



parent more, than the spirit of humble and ardent prayerfulness. Prayer is indispensable to holy living. It nurtures and strengthens the principles and emotions of godliness. It is the way of intercourse with Heaven. The words of the Poet are no less true than beautiful:—

“Prayer makes the darken’d cloud withdraw;  
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;  
Gives exercise to faith and love;  
Brings every blessing from above.  
Restraining prayer we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christian’s armor bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest Saint upon his knees.”

Would you have your child to think of God, and to learn the way to the throne of his mercy? You must upon your knees in frequent and solemn prayer set the example, and give the impulse. But, that parental prayerfulness may have its desired effect, the daily conversation and deportment must be consistent and correspondent.

2d. Christian instruction is also necessary to the correct training of children. The perceptions of children are clear and vivid on divine subjects, even in early life. Their consciences are then tender, and their moral affections easily excited and enlisted. The impressions made on the mind in early life are apt to be abiding. That is the proper season for educating the conscience, and furnishing “this vicegerent of God in the soul” with necessary admonitions. When thoroughly instructed, the conscience is a powerful guard in moral actions; and its restraints, and admonitions, and reproofs are

surpassed by nothing, except the efficacious influences of the Divine Spirit. The value of moral lessons, and pious instructions is fully recognized in the word of God.—“Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”—Deut. vi. 4-7. In Deut. xi. 18-21 we find nearly the same words repeated. In Psalm lxxviii. 1-7, there is an inculcation of the same duty.—“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old; which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works, that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, which should be born, who should arise, and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.”

Let no one suppose that the law of heaven

was intended merely for Old Testament times and people, when children were born in ignorance and depravity, and needed illumination and purification—but that in these days of gospel light, and religious liberty, and plentiful effusions of divine influence, the necessity, and even propriety, of early instruction, is superseded! No such year of jubilee to parental sloth and indifference has yet been announced. Has God less regard for children now, than he formerly had? Or has he less regard for his own authority and honor? Do children now stand in less need of instruction, and of divine influence, than they formerly did? Or is the knowledge of God and his favor of less value now, than formerly? Do the pages of the New Testament furnish any such lesson as this! No, verily. The character of man, in his native estate, as we find it there drawn, is not fairer than the pages of the Old Testament exhibit. He is the same benighted and depraved being that he formerly was. He stands in need of the same human and divine instruction, that he formerly did. There is much comprehended in that brief advice of the Apostle Paul—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise,) that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" Eph. vi. 1-4.

3d. The prudent and efficient exercise of

parental authority is also necessary, to the proper training of children. This was a distinguishing trait in the character of Abraham—"For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him."

The law of love is the most subduing, and, at the same time, the most permanent in its influence, that can be enacted. It is by this law that God attaches to his throne the myriads of angels that surround it. It is by this law that the Holy Spirit subdues the human heart. It is an exhibition of God in Christ Jesus, that the Spirit wields, to the disarming the heart of the panoply of rebellion, and to the investing of it with the robe of righteousness. The sternness of authority ought always to be attempered with the blandishments of undissembled love. Nevertheless, it is absolutely necessary that parental authority be *exerted and felt*. It is well, nay, it is indispensable to virtue and to happiness—that the mind be taught submission to rightful authority. But the morning of life is the time when this may be easily effected. The tender twig is easily bent; but the proud and unyielding oak of the forest must be prostrated by the blast of the hurricane, or riven by the resistless bolt of heaven.

Needless commands should not be given. Parental authority is too sacred to admit of solemn trifling. It is the most striking emblem on earth of the authority of Heaven. What is required should be right and needful. But should the child refuse to obey; admonition, expostulation, and if

really necessary, chastisement should be given. This, however, should be done kindly and prayerfully. Discipline, when it is administered in anger, is almost sure to defeat the contemplated object. But the child must be subdued, *cost what it may*, otherwise ruin will ensue. It is unintelligent and unchristian love that spares the rod through sympathy and pity for the offending child. It is not in this way our heavenly Father treats his offending children. God requires us to imitate his example. The neglect of parental authority is not a matter of indifference, or of small consideration. Let not parents think that they may indulge or restrain their children at their own option, and that their conduct will not pass under the scrutiny of Heaven. A solemn trust is committed to them, and a solemn obligation rests upon them. This trust cannot be laid aside, or committed to another. Nor can the bonds of this obligation be sundered. God will hold every parent that he has endowed with reason, answerable at his bar, for his course of conduct. The neglect of parental authority is exceedingly displeasing to Him. Of this, an awful instance is recorded for our admonition, in 1 Sam. iii. 11-14: "And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things, which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the *iniquity which he knoweth*;



because his sons made themselves vile, and *he restrained them not*. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever!"

I intend, in the next essay, to speak of the consequence of the believing dedication, and spiritual training of children.

FAITHFUL DEDICATION AND TRAINING OF  
CHILDREN.

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ESSAY XIX.

“FOR I know him, that *he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment*; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”—Gen. xviii. 19.

Atheism is the consummation of folly. It is equally untrue and unwise to affirm, that “it is a *vain thing* to serve God.” If there be a God, his perfections must be infinite. But the arrangements and requirements of a Being, who is in every respect perfect, cannot be otherwise than “*holy, and just, and good.*” And how can compliance with such requirements be otherwise than beneficial? The honest performance of any duty must, in the very nature of the case, carry its reward with it. This is the utterance of reason, it is also the sentiment of inspiration. “In keeping the judgments of the Lord, there is great reward.” This will apply to the dedication and training of children, as well as to the performance of any other duty. In the very act of

dedication, if it be properly performed, the faith and the hope and the love of the parent are strengthened and matured; and in the proper training, there is a growth in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour. The consequence to the children, who are thus dedicated and trained, is also felicitous and glorious. "They shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." There is a divine connexion established between the faith of the parent and the character of the child. This connexion obtains, it is true, on principles of grace. There is no transmission of faith on natural principles. The seed of grace is not imparted by natural generation. It does not flow in the blood. It is not the creature of education. It is not the result of any *imitative* power of man's nature: The provision is to be found in the covenant of grace. It is by faith this covenant is entered, and its provisions secured. It is the promise of God, carried into effect by the Holy Spirit, that lays the ground for hope, and that energizes and secures the blessed result. The parent's faith must take hold of this promise, and act upon it. It is this promise that warrants the dedication, and that sheds upon the training the bright and cheering beams of hope. Some beautiful illustrations of this principle, are found in the Holy Scriptures. Witness the case of Hannah and of Samuel. 1 Sam. i. 9-11, 24-28. Hannah solemnly vowed to the Lord, that if he would give her a man-child, she would, by a solemn and perpetual dedication, give him back to the Lord. Her prayer

was heard, and her request was granted. Nor was her vow forgotten or violated. This child of prayer and of promise was duly and truly consecrated and trained; and the gracious principles of this everlasting covenant, are legible in the eminently devout character of that devoted son. Who among the prophets of Israel was more distinguished for piety and usefulness than Samuel? What a beautiful illustration of the same principle is to be found in the case of the evangelist Timothy! How remarkable is the language of Paul! How easily understood, on the principles that are here advocated; and how difficult on any other supposition?

“When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice, and I am persuaded that in thee also.”—2 Tim. i. 5. Can any intelligent and candid reader suppose that the apostle did not intend to convey the idea of a connexion between the faith of Timothy, and that of his mother and grandmother? If there was no such connexion, why speak of *their* faith, when describing *his*? And why represent the faith of the son, the mother, and the grandmother, as being of the same character? But if it was the design of the apostle to express this covenant connexion, and thus to illustrate the principles and provisions of the covenant of grace; how pertinent and how happy is the illustration! The unfeigned faith of Timothy dwelt *first* in his grandmother, and then in his mother. With the Abrahamic covenant and its rich pro-

visions before us, this is plain and delightful. By faith Lois entered the covenant, and gave up herself and her daughter Eunice to that covenant keeping God, whose promise is, "I will be a God to thee, and thy seed after thee." The blessing promised in the covenant was entailed by the Holy Spirit on Eunice, who also became a true believer in the Lord Jesus. By faith Eunice devoted herself and her son Timothy to the Lord, and entered on the solemn and interesting duties, involved in the scriptural training of a child. The apostle bears testimony to this diligent training. "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them, and that *from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, which is in Christ Jesus."—2 Tim. iii. 14, 15. The effect of this faithful dedication and scriptural training, is to be found in the unfeigned faith of Timothy. Therefore, though it is indisputably true, that all that truly believe in Christ "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;" yet, according to the principles and provisions of the Abrahamic covenant, a believing dedication and a scriptural training will secure a pious offspring from generation to generation, down to the close of time, and the opening of the scenes of eternity. If the course of Lois and of Eunice were pursued, would not the result be the same? As the promises of God are all *Yea* and *Amen* in



Christ Jesus, and as he is the God of the Gentile as well as of the Jew, will it not fairly follow that wherever there is a believing dedication and a scriptural training, the result will be blessed? And where the final result is otherwise, is there not presumptive evidence that there has been something materially defective, either in the dedication or in the training?

With the views here advocated, the words of Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailer do well accord: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved, and *thy house*." Why speak of the salvation of the jailer's house, in direct connexion with his faith, and as a consequence, too, of his faith, if the connexion does not exist? Can words be plainer? Can a conclusion follow more fairly from premises admitted or established? The words of the angel to Cornelius, indicate the same thing: "Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell *thee words*, whereby *thou and all thy house shall be saved*."—Acts xi. 13, 14. On what other ground or principles can the truth of the inspired proverb be made to appear? "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old *he will not depart from it*."—Prov. xxii. 6. This implies that there may be youthful waywardness, but there will be final reformation. The religious instruction, carefully and prayerfully given in early youth, may at the time, and for years afterwards, appear to be unheeded. But in the end, it will be seen not to have been given in vain. In many cases, no doubt, the

prayers of pious parents are answered after their time of prayer and toil and trial is over, and they have been admitted to the large inheritance of heaven. God cannot forget or disregard his own promises, though they have been graciously made, without any regard to merit in his people, and merely out of respect to the righteousness of his Son.

If the faith of the parent be genuine and unfeigned, it will not cease at the period of the dedication of the child, but it will be operative during life. True and living faith is persevering, and finally triumphant. The proper and scriptural evidence of its genuineness is its perseverance. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." This will apply to the believer's dedication of his offspring, as well as to that of himself. When he feels remiss about his own personal holiness and salvation, he has reason to distrust the integrity of his self-dedication. So, when he feels indifferent about the conversion and salvation of his children, he may call in question the dedication he made of them. All God's promises and plans are calculated and intended to promote purity of heart, and the faithful and diligent discharge of every Christian duty. And what he undertakes he performs like a God. But in performing his work he does not supersede the prayerfulness, the anxiety, the watchfulness, the holy and persevering endeavours of his people. Were he to minister to their sloth and inactivity by dispensing with their personal endeavours, he would

thereby strip them of the bright adorning of heaven, and render them incapable of enjoying its unutterable and imperishable bliss. "Heaven-born and heaven-bound," is the Christian's true character, and the *uneffaceable inscription* on his banner. "Being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." —Phil. i. 6.

"Grace will complete what grace begins,  
To save from sorrows or from sins;  
The work that wisdom undertakes,  
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

What an encouraging and propelling appeal does this subject make to parental affection and anxiety! Has God benignly and mercifully included the children with their parents in the covenant of grace? Has he made ample provision in this covenant for the children as well as the parents? Does he propose to be a God to the children as well as the parents? Does he promise to circumcise their hearts to love and serve the Lord? And are these promises made on the condition, that the parents dedicate their children to him in faith, and train them for him? And, that parents may be excited to this hallowed work of dedicating and training their children, has God deeply implanted in parental bosoms a strong affection for their children, and a tender anxiety for their welfare? Shall professing parents even cherish this affection and anxiety by a diligent attention to the temporal interests of their children; and at the same time

with hearts burdened with the solicitude, neglect their highest interests, and permit their immortal souls, that are worth more than man or angel can compute, to go down to death, unwarned of danger and uninvited to the skies! What prayer, what instruction, what training does their future and eternal well being demand! Their place around the family altar, and in the house of God should be regarded as sacred, and should be well attended.

Let parents often look upward to the heights of eternal and heavenly blessedness, and downward to the depths of endless wretchedness; let them carefully, solemnly, and prayerfully consider the great encouragements afforded by the provisions of the gracious and everlasting covenant, and the weighty responsibility, that hereby devolves upon them; then, leaning on the Divine arm, and invoking the aid of the Holy Spirit, let them dedicate their children to the God of Abraham, and honestly endeavour to train them "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And, as baptism is the sign and seal of the covenant, and at the same time the symbol of the official fulness of the Holy Spirit, let them publicly and visibly give them up to the Lord in that ordinance.





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BY

REV. WILLIAM EAGLETON,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro', Tenn.

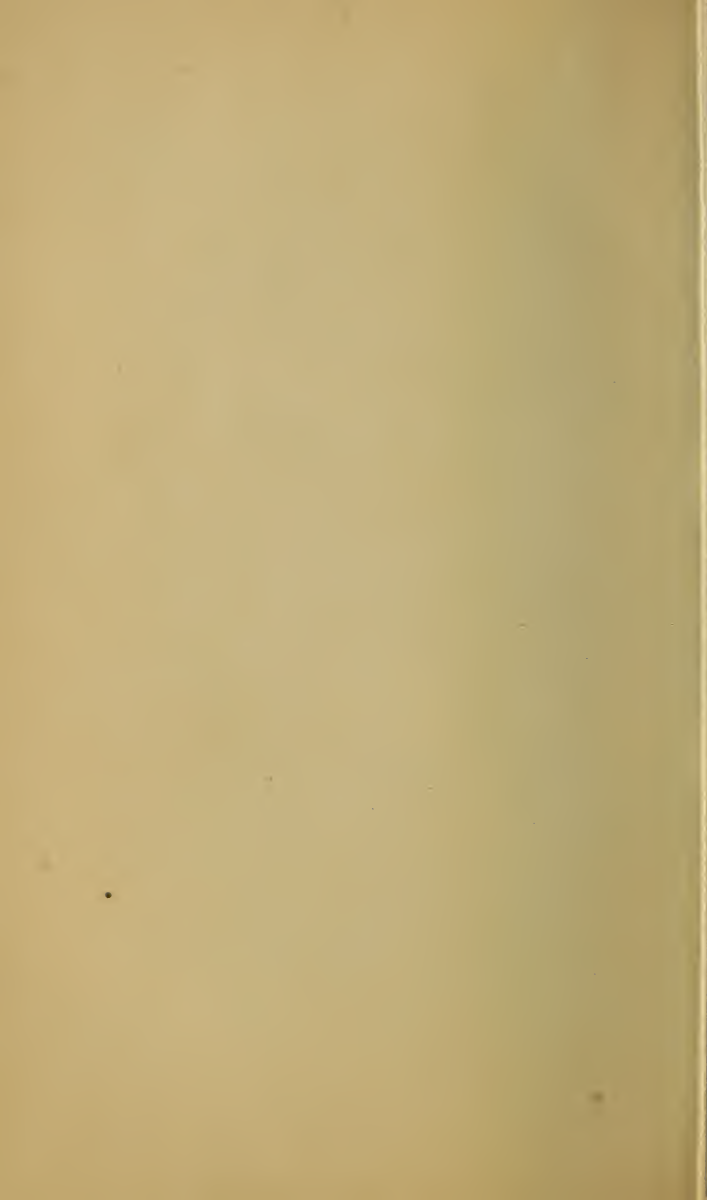
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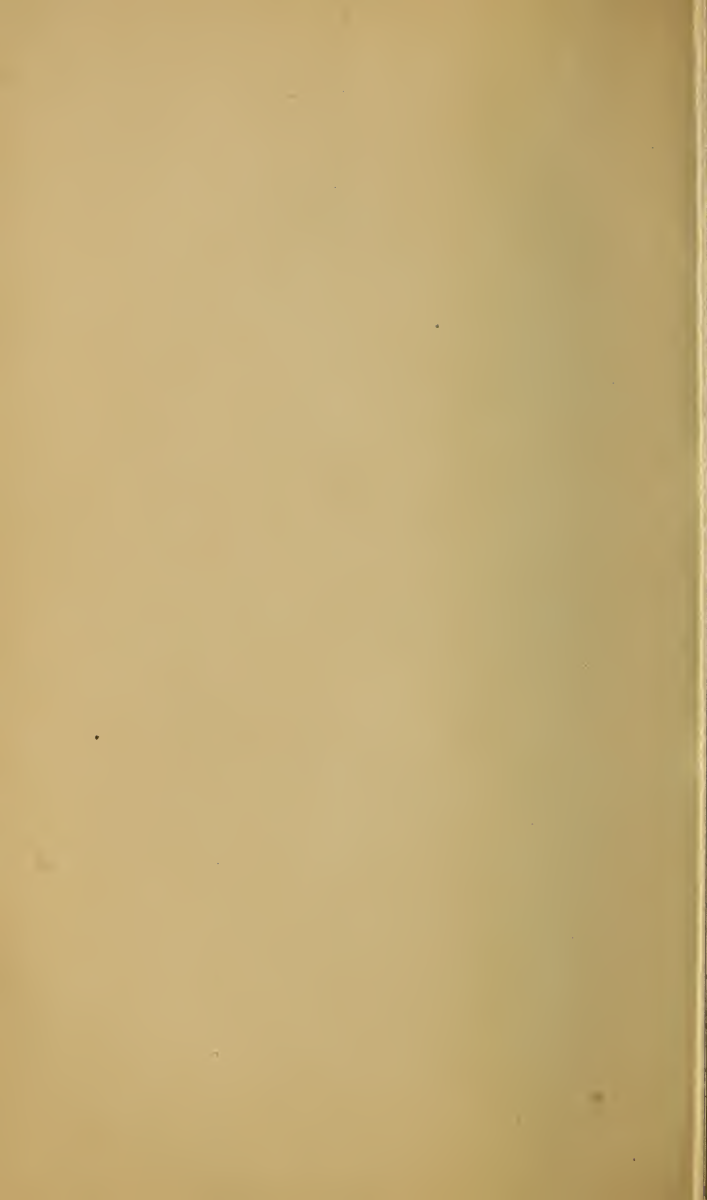






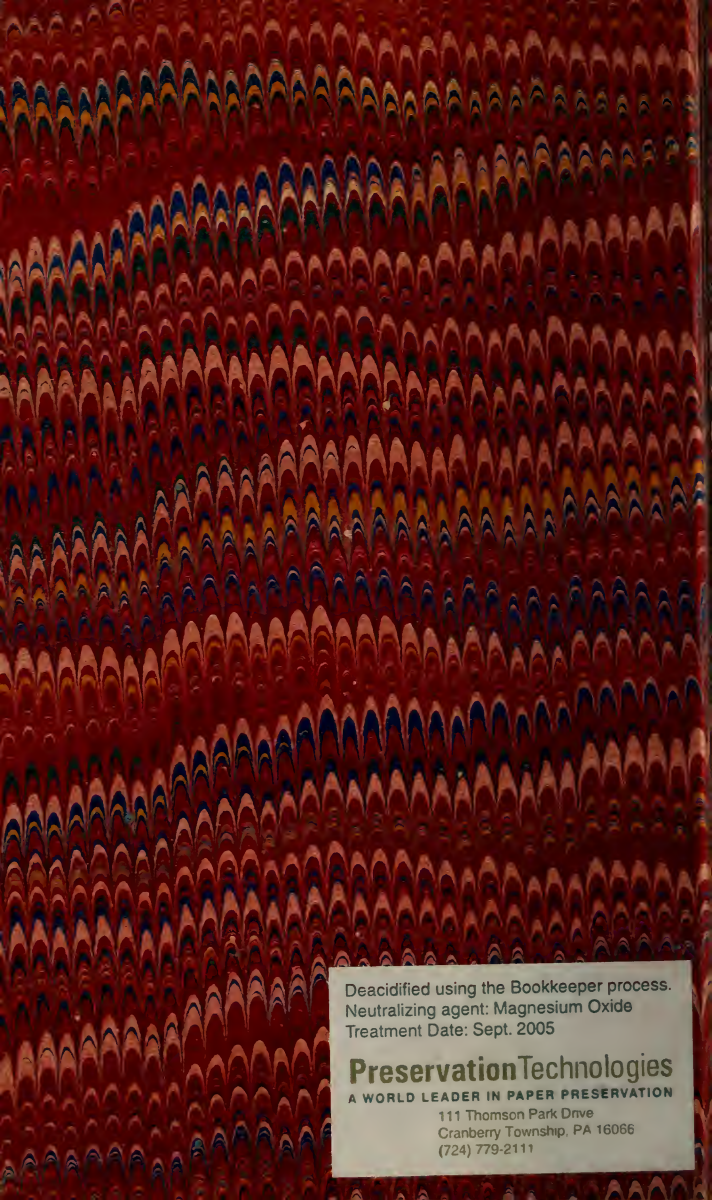






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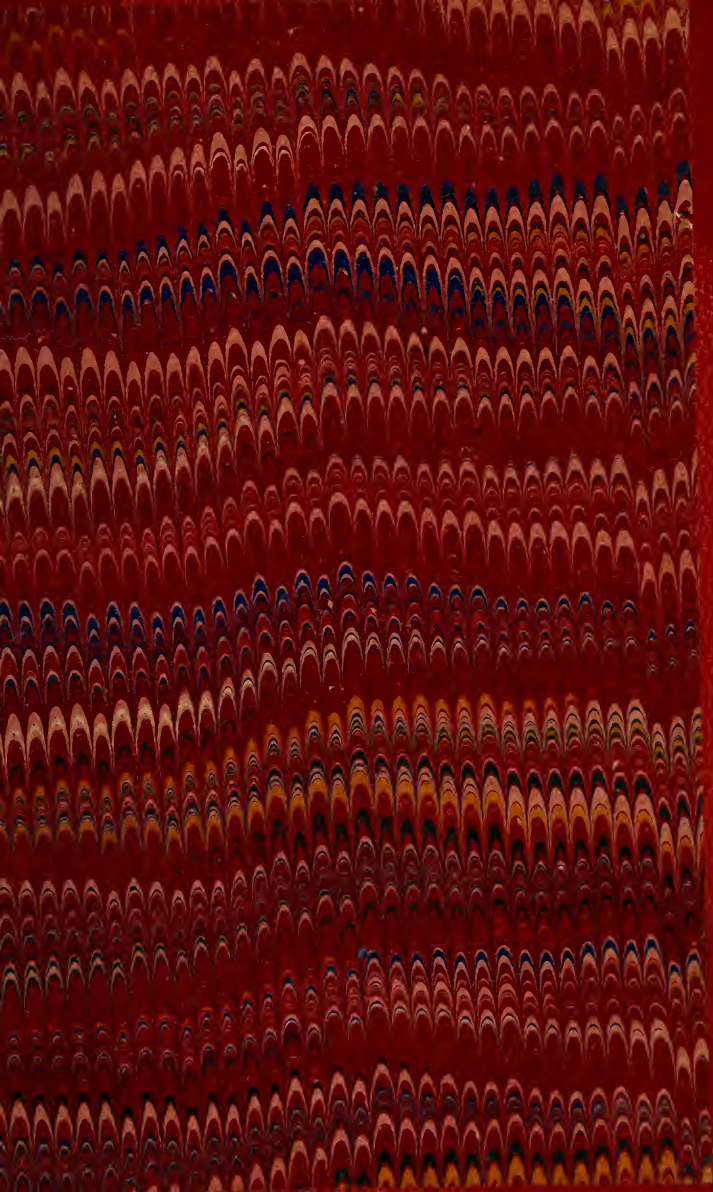


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